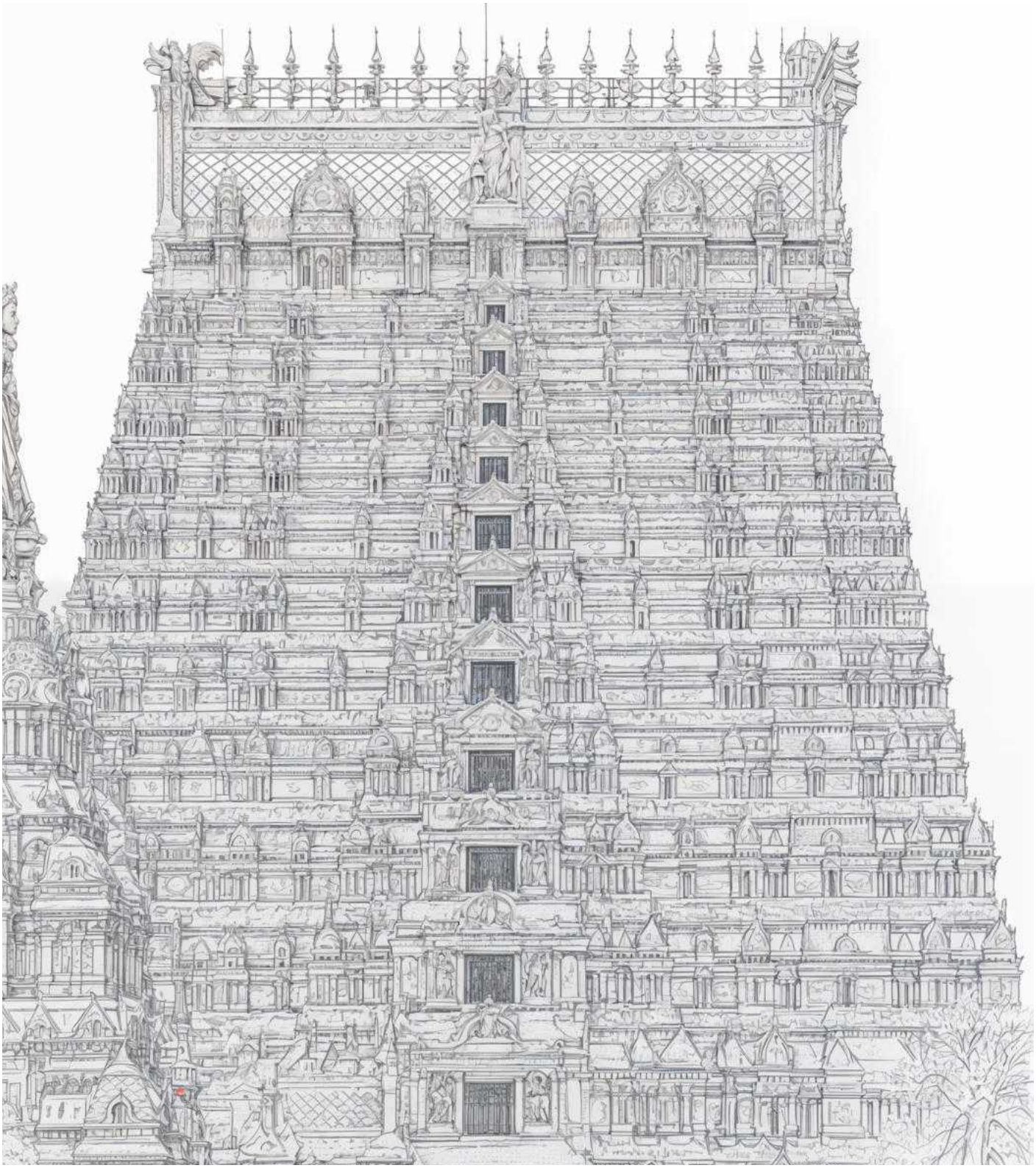
# DIVYA DESAM

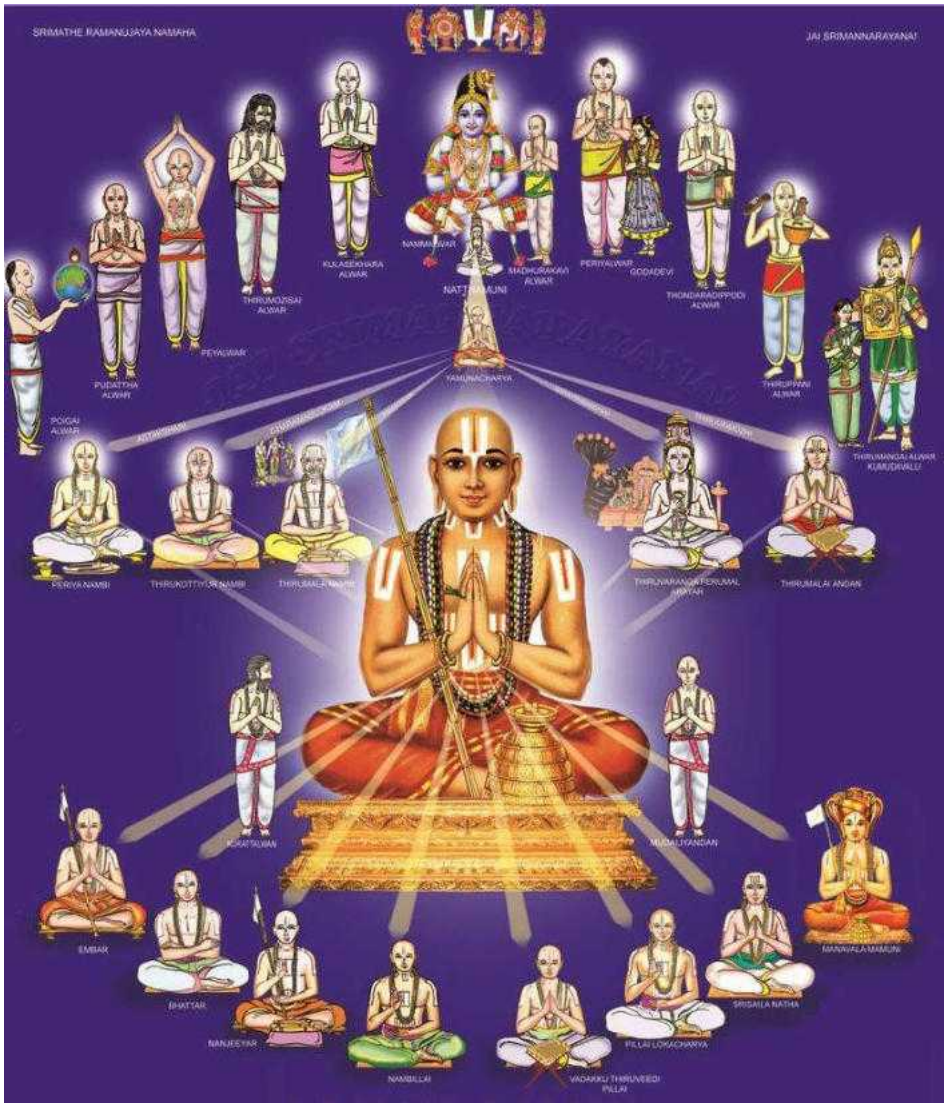
# DARSHANAM

The 108 Holy Abodes Of Lord Vishnu



Kalyana Krishna Dasa

# Dedicated to




**Lakshminatha samarambham Natha Yamuna madhyamam**

**Asmad acharya paryantam Vande guru paramparam**

**Meaning:** I bow down to the line of spiritual teachers — beginning with Lord Lakshminatha (Lord Vishnu, the consort of Goddess Lakshmi), with Nathamuni and Yamunacharya in the middle, and continuing up to my own spiritual master. I offer my respectful obeisance to that entire guru-parampara (disciplic succession).

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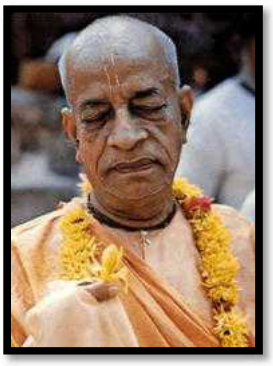

**Also to,**

## His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

*Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)*

The illustrious Acharya who carried the message of Vaishnavism to every corner of the world.

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# 1 Sri Rangam (Thiruvarangam)

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Lord Brahma first received the divine Sriranga Vimanam in his meditation on Vishnu and worshipped it daily before beginning creation; King Ikshvaku later brought it to Ayodhya, where it was adored by the Surya dynasty until Lord Rama, after his coronation, gifted it to Vibhishana of Lanka. While carrying it south, Vibhishana set the Vimanam down on the banks of the Cauvery, where by divine will it became fixed, as the Lord had promised Cauvery to remain upon her as a garland, thus manifesting as Lord Ranganatha gazing southward toward Lanka. The Chola king Dharmavarma first built a shrine here, which was later restored by King Killivallavan after a parrot revealed its hidden presence, and so arose the great temple of Srirangam—foremost of the Nava Ratna temples—glorified in Sangam and Puranic lore, sanctified by Alwars and Acharyas like Ramanuja, and renowned for its concentric prakaras, towering gopurams, awaiting Garuda, and magnificent festivals such as Vaikunta Ekadasi and Panguni Brahmotsavam. Temple is known as "Periya Koil"; Lord is "Periya Perumal"; unique Nadai Azhagu (graceful walk) of Utsavar; Suprabhatam sung only by hereditary Sripadam Thangis. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Ranganatha Swamy**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing South)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Sri Ranganayaki (Peria Pirattiyar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Namperumal and Azhagiya Manavaallan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Punnai Tree |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chandra Pushkarani, Surya Pushkarani, Vilva Theertham, Naaval Theertham, Arasu Theertham, Punnai Theertham, Maghiz Theertham, Porasu Theertham, Kadamba Theertham, Maa Theertham, and Kaveri river itself is Theertham here. |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pranavakruti |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Vibhishana (Ravana's brother), King Dharmavarma, Chandra, Several Acharyas, Thulukka Nachiar, Woraiyur Nachiar, Chera Kulavalli |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Except Madhurakavi Alvar, all of the other eleven Alvars have created Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Ranganathar in Srirangam. Out of 247, 35 are by Periyalvar, 10 by Andal, 31 by Kulasekara Alvar, 14 by Thirumalisai Alvar, 55 by Thondaradippodi Alvar, 10 by Thiruppaan Alvar, 73 by Thirumangai Alvar, one by Poigai Alvar,4 by Bhoothathalvar, two by Peyalvar and twelve by Nammalvar. |

Lord Sri Ranganatha Perumal and Goddess Ranganayaki - Sri Rangam

# 2 Thiru Kozhi (Uraiyur)

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | From the Chola line of King Dharmavarma was born Nanda Chola, a devout ruler of Woriyur who, though prosperous, remained childless until Lord Vishnu ordained that Mahalakshmi herself should be born as his daughter. The king discovered the divine child seated on a lotus in a pond, named her Kamalavalli, and in due time she fell in love with Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam; the Lord revealed in a dream that she was Lakshmi incarnate and accepted her in marriage, manifesting as Azhagiya Manavalan—the Beautiful Bridegroom—an event still remembered through the Serthi Sevai festival. In memory of this divine wedding, Nanda Chola built the Azhagiya Manavalan Temple at Woriyur, later buried when Shiva destroyed the city, yet rebuilt in Chola times, while the site itself is also famed as Kozhiyur—named after a fowl's victory over an elephant—and Nichulapuri in the scriptures, sanctified further by the worship of King Ravivarmaraja. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Azhagiya Manavalan**<br>*(Nindra Kollam - Standing Posture facing North)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Kamalavalli Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Azhagiya Manavalan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kalyana Theertham, Surya Pushkarini and Kudamurutti River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kalyana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Nanda Chola, Thiruppaan Alwar, Ravivarmaraja, and Thirty Three Crore Demigods |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Sri Azhagiya Manavalan sung by Kulasekara alvar in eleven hymns and Thirumangai Alvar in thirteen hymns.<br>• This is the Birthplace of Thiruppaan Alwar. |

Lord Sri Azhagiya Manavalan Perumal, Goddess Kamalavalli, and Thirupaan Azhwar - Thirukozhi (Nachiyar Koil or Uraiyur)

# 3 Thirukkarambanoor

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Lord Vishnu manifested here as a Kadamba tree, giving the place the name Karambanur—praised by Thirumangai Alvar as "Karambanur Uthaman"—and the temple came to be known as Uthamar Kovil, where Shiva, in the form of Bhikshandar, attained relief by worshipping Him. The temple is sanctified by the story of Brahma worshipping Vishnu with ablutions that formed the sacred Kathamba Theertham, and by the tale of Shiva atoning for the sin of cutting Brahma's head, fully freed from his curse through Vishnu's grace, with Lakshmi herself venerated as Poornavalli Thayar for filling Shiva's alms-bowl. Another tradition holds that King Janaka of Videha built this temple, and that Thirumangai Alvar resided here while raising the walls of the great Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangam. This place is known as Kadamba Kshetram. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Purushottama Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Poornavalli Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Lord Sri Purushottaman |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Kadamba Tree |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kadamba Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Udhyoga Vimana |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Kadamba Muni, Thirumangai Azhwar, Uparisaravasu, Four Kumaras. |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Purushottama Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in one hymn. |

Lord Sri Purushothaman Perumal and Goddess Purushottama Nayaki - Thirukkarambanoor (Uthamar Kovil)

# 4 Thiruvellarai

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | The name Vellarai, meaning "white rock," recalls the region's ancient title Thiru Vellara, where legend tells that King Sibi, guided by sage Markandeya, filled a boar's hiding place with milk, upon which Lord Vishnu manifested and commanded the building of a temple with 3700 Vaishnavas, even appearing incognito as Pundarikakshan to complete their number. Another tradition narrates that Goddess Lakshmi performed penance here, receiving Vishnu's vision as Sengamalakannan, thereafter worshipped as Thamarai Kannan with His consort Pankajavalli. The temple also holds sanctity as the place where Shiva, in the form of Neelivaneswarar, worshipped Vishnu to be freed from the sin of severing Brahma's head, with both Shiva and Brahma blessed by the Lord's grace. This place is known as Vedagiri Kshetram. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Pundarikakshan (Thamarai Kannan) Perumal**<br>*(Standing Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Senbagavalli Thayar and Pankajavalli Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Pundarikakshan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Kadhallee (Banyan tree) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Divya, Gandha and Ksheera Pushkarinis. Kucha, Chakra, Pushkala, Padma, Varaha and Manikarnika Theerthams – all these Theerthams are inside Temple Complex |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Vimalaakkruthi Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Sibi, Garuda, Goddess Bhudevi, Sage Markandeya, Goddess Lakshmi, Lord Brahma and other demigods |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Pundarikakshan Perumal sung by Periyalvar in eleven hymns and Thirumangai Alvar in thirteen hymns.<br>• This is the birthplace of Uyyakondar, a disciple of Nathamuni, and Swami Engalazhwan. Swami Engalazhwan is believed to have taught Sri Bhasyam to Nadadhoor Ammal in the temple. |

Lord Sri Pundarikakshan Perumal and Goddess Senkamalavalli – Thiruvellarai

# 5 Thiru Anbil

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Sage Suthaba, cursed by Durvasa to become a frog for neglecting him, performed penance in the sacred Mannduga Theertham until Lord Vishnu appeared as Sundararajan and released him. Another tale recounts how Brahma, proud of his beauty as the creator of mankind, was cursed by Vishnu to be born on earth, but was later blessed when the Lord revealed Himself as a radiant youth, teaching that true worth lies not in outward form but in inner purity. Thus the temple stands sanctified by both the deliverance of Sage Suthaba and the humbling of Lord Brahma through Lord Vishnu's divine grace. This place is known as Mandugapuri Kshethram. When Thirumezhisai Alwar visited this place, he was mocked and ridiculed by the people, so he prayed to Lord Vishnu to reveal His presence and vindicate his devotion. In response, the Lord emerged from the saint himself and manifested here as Vadhivazhagiya Nambi, thereby affirming the Alwar's sanctity and teaching the people a lesson. This divine appearance enshrined the temple as a testimony to the Lord's protection of His true devotees. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vadivazhagiya Nambi**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Azhagiyavalli Naachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sundararajan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Mannduga Theertham, Kollidam River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Taraka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Brahma, Sage Valmiki, and Sage Suthaba |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vadivazhagiya Nambi Perumal sung by Thirumalisai Alvar in two hymns. |

Lord Sri Sundararaja Perumal and Goddess Soundaryavalli - Thiru Anbil

# 6 Thiruppernagar (Koviladi)

**Sthalapuranam:**

King Ubharisaravasu, once absorbed in penance to Lord Vishnu, failed to notice Sage Durvasa and was cursed to lose his strength, but on pleading for mercy was instructed to perform annadhanam for a lakh people at Palasavana Kshetram by the Cauvery. Obediently, the king fed thousands daily, when one day an old man arrived, consumed all the food prepared for the multitudes, and still hungered, asking the king for a pot of appam. As the king humbly served him, the old man revealed Himself as Lord Vishnu, lifted the curse, and reclined there with the pot of appam, thus the deity came to be worshipped as Appakkudathaan of Palasavana Kshetram. This is the sacred place where Sage Markandeya was saved from Yama's curse of death at the age of sixteen, and where Lord Ranganatha subdued the pride of Indra. The site came to be called Koviladi, as it lies downstream of the great Srirangam temple revered as "Kovil" in Vaishnava tradition, while in Chola times it was known as Per Nagar, hence the temple is also called Tiruppernagar, a name sung by the Alvars in the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Appakkudathaan (Appaala Ranganathan)**
*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing West)*

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Indiravalli** and **Goddess Kamalavalli**

**Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):**

Purasai Vriksham

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Indira Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Indira Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Ubharisaravasu and Sage Markandeya

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Appakkudathaan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in eleven hymns, Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn, Periyalvar Alvar in two hymns, and Thirumangai Alvar in nineteen hymns.

Lord Sri Appakkudathaan Perumal and Goddess Indravalli - Thirupper Nagar (Koviladi)

# 7 Thirukandiyur

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | According to the Brahmanda Purana, both Brahma and Shiva once had five heads. When Parvati mistakenly worshipped Brahma, Shiva, enraged, cut off one of Brahma's heads. Due to Brahma's curse, the severed head stuck to Shiva's hand. To expiate this sin, Shiva worshipped Vishnu as Bhikshatana at Thirukarambanur, then at Thirukandiyur, where bathing in the temple tank Kamala Pushkarani finally freed him. Since Vishnu (Perumal) relieved Shiva (Hara) of the curse (saabha), the temple became known as Hara Saabha Vimochana Perumal Temple, and the tank as Kapala Theertham. Shiva, pleased, built a temple for Vishnu and one for himself nearby. Another legend says that Lakshmi requested Shiva to cut off Brahma's head so Vishnu would not neglect her. The site is also associated with the expiation of sins: Sage Bhrigu, who once kicked Vishnu in anger, atoned here; King Mahabali worshipped here; and Chandra, who sinned by seducing his guru's wife, partially expiated here. This is known as Trimurthi Kshetram. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Hara Saabha Vimochana Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kamalavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | **Kamalanathan** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Bali Theertham, Kudamurutti River, and Kapala Moksha Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kamalakrutha Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Shiva, Sage Bhrigu, King Mahabali and Chandra |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Hara Saabha Vimochana Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in ten hymns. |

Lord Sri Hara Saabha Vimochana Perumal and Goddess Kamalavalli - Thirukandiyur

# 8 Thirukoodalur (Aduthurai)

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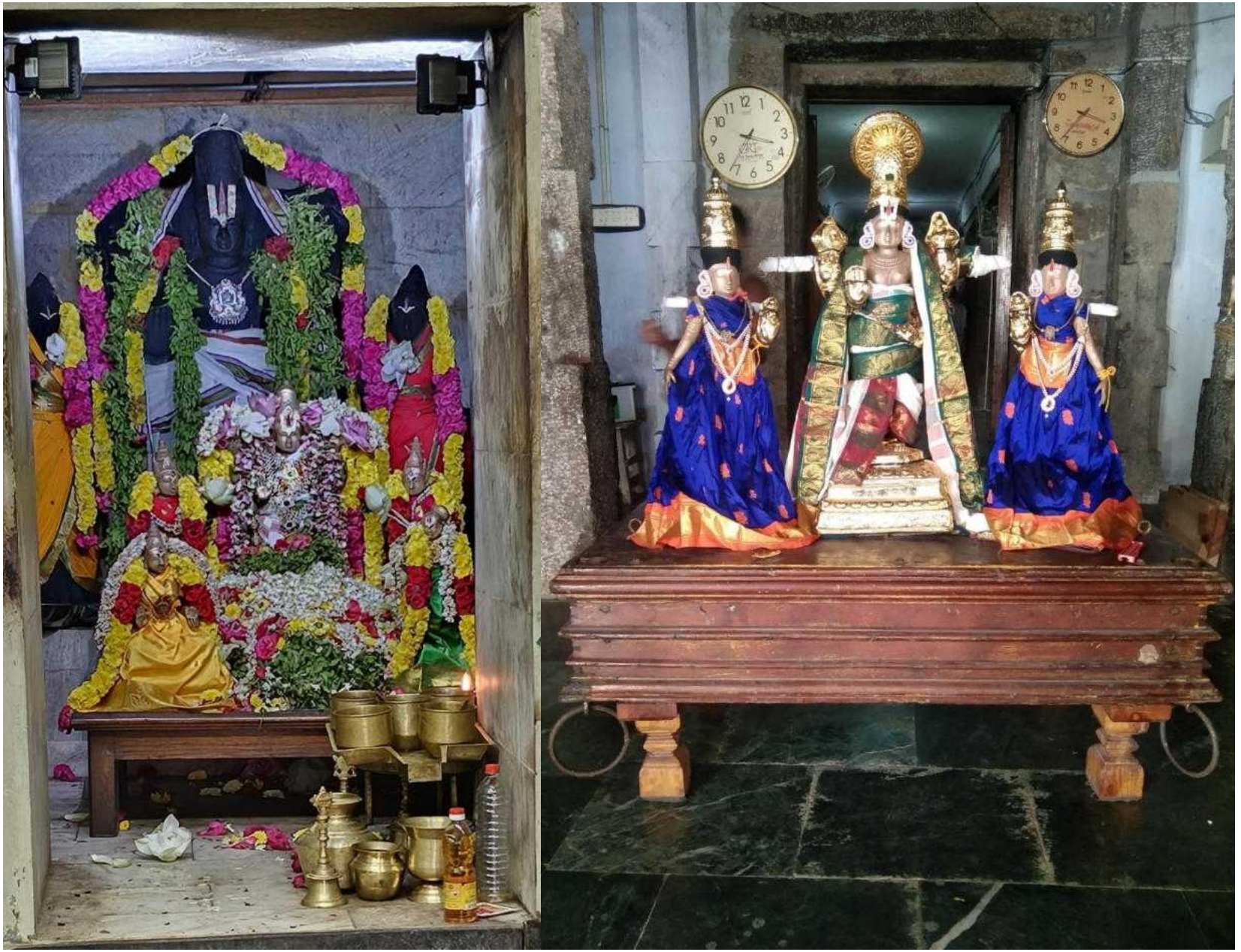
| **Sthalapuranam:** | King Ambarisha, devoted to the worship of Vishnu, neglected his army and lost his kingdom. Absorbed in worship, he also failed to notice the passing sage Durvasa, who, angered, cursed him. Ambarisha sought refuge in Vishnu, who dispatched his discus (Sudarshana Chakra) to pursue the sage. Terrified, Durvasa surrendered to Vishnu and begged forgiveness. Tradition holds that Ambarisha built the temple here, where the presiding deity is known as Ambarisha Varadhar. Another legend recounts that all rivers gather in the Kaveri to purify themselves. Seeking her own cleansing, Kaveri worshipped Vishnu at this site and was absolved. Nearby, a parrot devoted to Vishnu was shot down; the Lord revived it and freed it from its past birth. This episode affirms the belief that Vishnu descends here to protect all forms of life. Vishnu is also said to have appeared before sage Nandaka. As numerous sages assembled here to worship Him, the place came to be known as Koodalaur (from koodal, meaning "gathering"). The temple is called Vaiyam Katha Perumal Temple, for the deity is believed to have saved the world. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Jagad Rakshaka (Vaiyam Katha) Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Padmasani** and **Goddess Pushpavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Uyyavandhaar |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chakra Theertham, Indra Theertham, and Cauvery River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Suddha Sattva Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Ambarisha and Sage Nandaka |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Jagad Rakshaka Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in one hymn. |



Lord Sri Jagad Rakshaka Perumal and Goddess Padmasani - Thirukoodalur (Aduthurai)

# 9 Thirukavithalam

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | King Indradyumna, deeply absorbed in worshipping Vishnu, neglected his kingdom and army. In his devotion, he also failed to notice the passing sage Durvasa (or Agastya, according to some accounts). Angered, the sage cursed him to be reborn as an elephant. When the king humbly apologised, the sage, moved by his innocence, blessed him that even in his next birth he would remain a devotee of Vishnu and that the Lord would ultimately bestow grace upon him. In the temple tank nearby, a Gandharva named Kuhu, cursed by a sage, had been born as a crocodile. When the elephant, now known as Gajendra, was drinking water at the tank, the crocodile seized his leg. In pain, Gajendra cried out to Vishnu, calling Him Adimulam. Instantly, Vishnu appeared and dispatched His discus (Sudarshana Chakra), which destroyed the crocodile's curse. By the Lord's mercy, both Gajendra and Kuhu were restored to their original forms. Since Vishnu responded to the heartfelt cry of His devotee, He is worshipped here as Gajendra Varadar. It is also believed that Hanuman, the monkey devotee and lieutenant of Rama (Vishnu's avatar), worshipped the Lord at this site. Hence, the place came to be called Kabisthalam (kabi in meaning "monkey"). |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Gajendra Varadha Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Ramaamanivalli** and **Goddess Potramaraiyal** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Gajendra Pushkarni and Kapila Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Gaganakruti Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Gajendra, Gandharva Kuhu, and Hanuman |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • This temple is one of the Panchakanna (Krishnaranya) Kshetrams.<br>• Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Gajendra Varadha Perumal sung by Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn. |

Lord Sri Gajendra Varadha Perumal and Goddess Ramamanivalli – Thirukavithalam

# 10 Thirupullabhoothangudi

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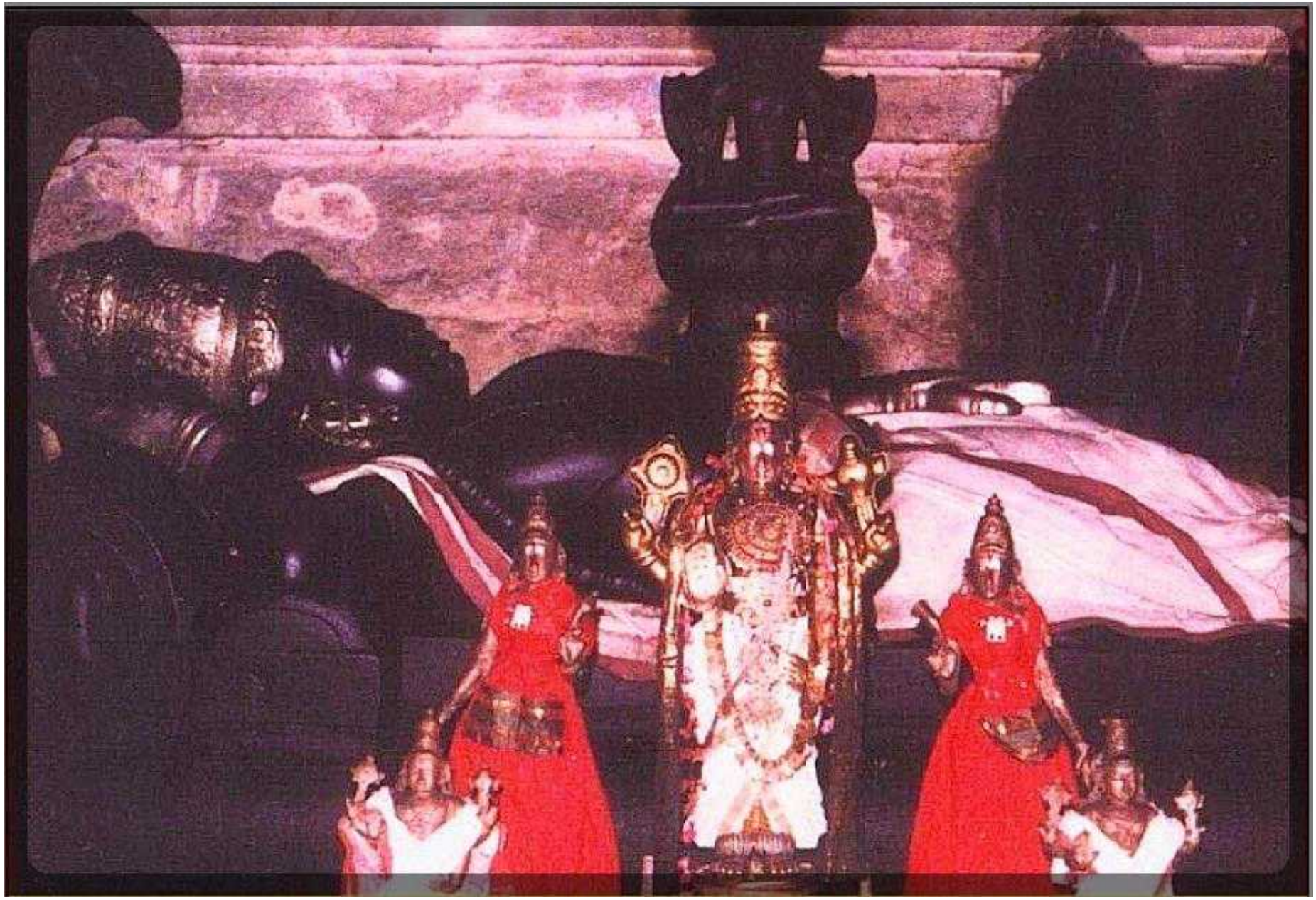
| **Sthalapuranam:** | The Brahmanda Purana and Padma Purana recount the sthala purana of the temple. In the Ramayana, when Ravana abducted Sita in the Pushpaka Vimana, the eagle king Jatayu valiantly fought to rescue her. Though mortally wounded, Jatayu managed to inform Rama of the abduction before breathing his last. Deeply moved, Rama performed the funeral rites for Jatayu. According to Hindu custom, the wife of the one performing such rites should accompany him; since Sita was absent, Bhumadevi manifested from a golden lotus to stand by Rama. This sacred episode is also associated with the Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple at Thiruputkuzhi. Tradition further holds that King Krita worshipped Vishnu at this site. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Valvil Ramar Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Hemambujavalli (Potraamaraiyaal)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Chakravarthi Thirumagan (Krudrarajan) |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Punnai Vriksham |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Jadayu Theertham and Krudra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Shobhana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Krita and Jatayu |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Valvil Ramar Perumal sung by Kulasekhara Alvar in one hymn and Thirumangai Alvar in ten hymns.<br>• This temple is unique as it is the only place where Lord Rama is depicted with four hands, two of which bear the conch and the discus. |



Lord Sri Valvil Ramar Perumal and Goddess Hemambujavalli – Thirupullabhoothangudi

# 11 Thiruaadhanur

Once a wealthy devotee of Lord Ranganatha who was cheated of his wealth by his workers. Moved by his devotion, Vishnu appeared in disguise and gave each worker sand from the Kollidam river, which turned into jewels for the sincere but remained sand for the idle. When the deceitful workers grew angry, the Lord revealed His true form, making them repent. Another legend recounts that Indra, cursed by sage Bhrigu to lose his powers, and Agni, afflicted with Brahmahathya Dosha for burning Brahma's head, worshipped Vishnu here and were relieved of their sins.

**Sthalapuranam:**

Kamadhenu, the divine cow that grants all forms of wealth, emerged during Vishnu's Kurma Avatar and was gifted to Indra, the king of heaven. Since the Lord granted His vision (pratyaksham) to Kamadhenu here, the place came to be called Thiru Adhanoor (Aa meaning cow, than + oor signifying place). The presiding deity appears in a reclining posture (kidantha thirukkolam) along with Ranganayaki Thayar, resting on a marakkal (measuring vessel) with a writing instrument (ezhuthaani) and palm leaf beneath His hand. Remarkably, this is the only Divya Desam where the deity of Thirumangai Alvar resides inside the sanctum (garbhagriha) alongside the main deity; in all other temples, the Alvars remain outside.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Andalakkum Aiyan Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Ranganayaki** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Azhagiya Manavaallan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Punnai and Paadali |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Surya Theertham and Chandra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pranava Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Agni, Kamadhenu and Thirumangai Alvar |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Andalakkum Aiyan Perumal sung by Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn.
- The temple was once buried underground, and a Kashmiri princess fell under the spell of a magician. Vishnu appeared in the king's dream, instructing him to restore the submerged temple. When the king obeyed, the princess was relieved of her affliction. Hence, worship at this temple is believed to protect devotees from the effects of witchcraft.

Lord Sri Andalakkum Aiyan Perumal and Goddess Ranganayaki – Thiruaadhanur

# 12 Thirukudanthai

**Sthalapuranam:**

Lord Sarangapani Perumal, a form of Lord Vishnu, appeared before sage Hemarishi, who was performing penance on the banks of the Potramarai tank. Earlier, when sage Bhrigu tested the supremacy of the Trimurti, he insulted Vishnu by kicking Him on the chest. Vishnu forgave the sage, but Lakshmi, angered by His indifference, left Vaikuntha and was born on earth as Padmavati. Vishnu followed her and took residence in the temple's underground chamber as Pathala Srinivasa. Later, Bhrigu, repentant, requested Lakshmi to be born as his daughter in his next birth. Reborn as Hemarishi, he performed penance, and Lakshmi emerged from the Potramarai tank as Komalavalli. Vishnu descended from Vaikuntha on a chariot drawn by horses and elephants, convinced her at the nearby Someswaran Temple, and eventually married her. The deity is worshipped as Sarangapani, meaning "the One who holds the bow Sharanga in His hand." Another legend tells of a devotee, Narayanaswamy of Thirukudanthai, who, childless, dedicated all his wealth to the temple and declared that the Lord Himself would perform his final rites. True to his faith, after his death, a mysterious young man appeared and carried out the rites. To this day, the temple observes the custom of keeping ritual items in Ara Amudhan's sanctum, signifying that the Lord continues to honour Narayanaswamy's devotion. This place is called as Bhaskara Kshethram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Aravamuda Perumal**
*(Uthaana Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)*

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Komalavalli**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):** Sarangapani

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Hemavalli Pushkarani (Pottramarai), River Cauvery and River Arasalaaru

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Vaideeka Vimanam (Veda Veda Vimanam)

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Hemarishi, Narayanaswamy, and Thirumazhisai Alvar

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- This is one of the Navaratnam temples representing Amurtharathnam, is famed for the legend of Thirumazhisai Alvar, who, enchanted by the beauty of Ara Amudhan Perumal, prayed to converse with Him. The Lord began rising from His reclining posture to answer, but at the Alvar's request remained partially risen, blessing devotees in this unique form called Uthra Sayanam or Uthanasai.
- Mangalasasanam (praise) has been rendered to Lord Sri Aravamuda Perumal by the Alvars in their sacred hymns. Among them, Andal has sung one verse, Periyalvar three, Bhuthath Alvar two, Tirumalisai Alvar seven, Peialvar two, Nammalvar eleven, and Thirumangai Alvar twenty-five verses.

Lord Sri Aravamuda Perumal and Goddess Komalavalli – Thirukudanthai

# 13 Thiruvinnagar

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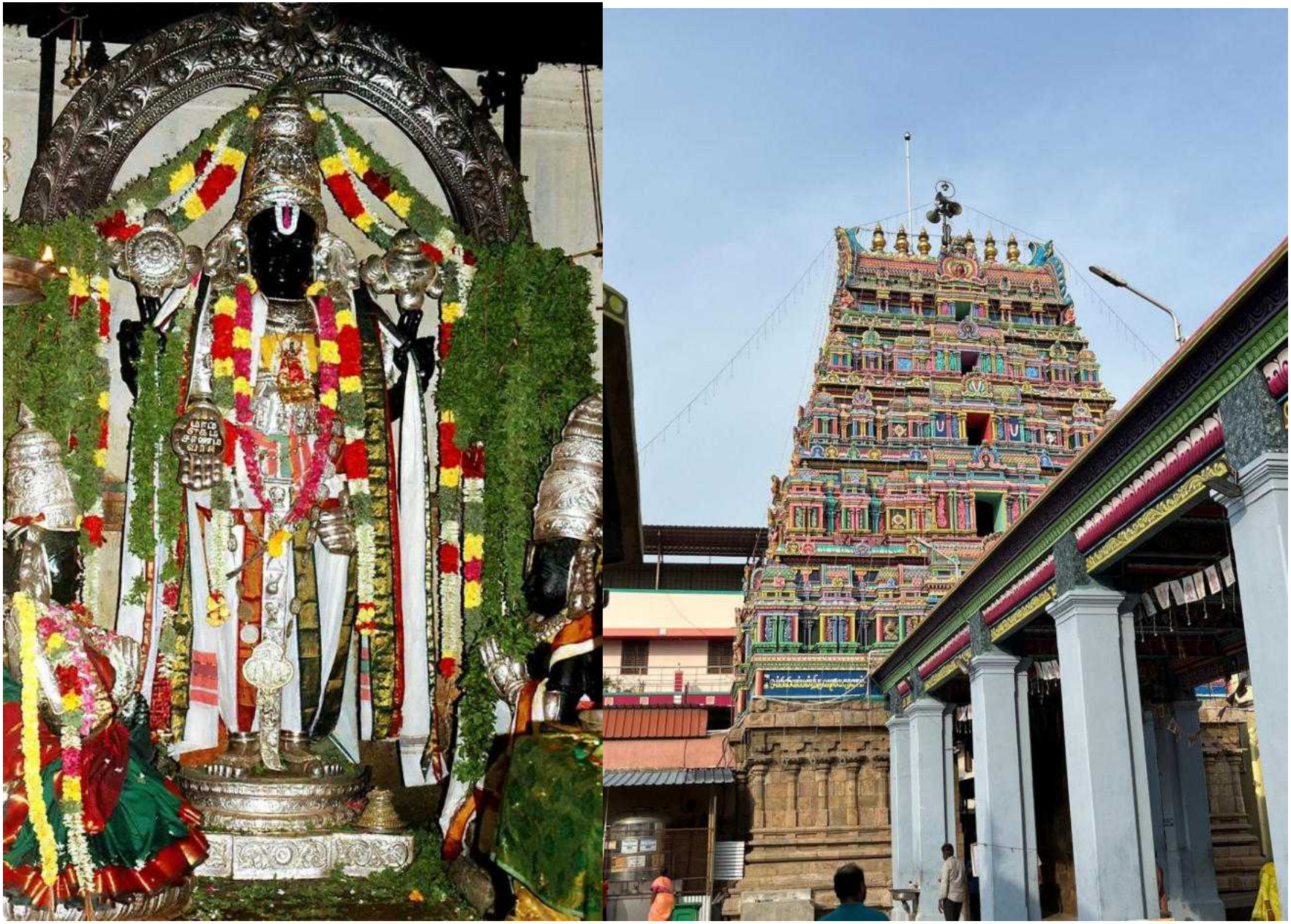
| **Sthalapuranam:** | The legend of Oppiliappan Temple is narrated in the Brahmanda Purana and echoed in Nammalvar's Thiruviruththam. Tulasi performed penance to attain nearness to Vishnu, who revealed that Lakshmi would appear under her lap at Tiruvinnagaram. Tulasi thus took form as a plant at the temple site. Sage Markandeya, desiring Lakshmi as his daughter and Vishnu as his son-in-law, performed penance for a thousand years. Lakshmi appeared as a baby under the Tulasi plant, whom Markandeya raised. When she came of age, Vishnu appeared as an old man and sought her hand. Though Markandeya hesitated, the Lord revealed His true form, and the divine marriage took place. As Vishnu accepted food even without salt, the temple offerings (neyvethiyam) are always prepared without salt. Hence, He is worshipped as Oppiliappan—the Lord without equal (Uppu = salt, Illai = without). Tulasi Devi and Bhooma Devi are believed to reside on His chest in the form of Tulasi garlands offered by devotees. The Ahoraathra Pushkarani (temple tank) has its own legend. A cursed king who had become a bird regained his human form upon falling into its waters during a stormy night. Since then, ritual bathing (theerththaadanam) is permitted here even at night. The temple and deity are known by many names: the place as Agasa Nagaram, Vaikunda Nagaram, Thiruvinnagar, Oppiliappan Sannithi, Uppiliappan Sannithi, and the deity as Venkatachalapathy, Thiruvinnagarappan, Oppiliappan, Thanoppillappan, Uppiliappan, and Srinivasan. This place is called as Markandeya Kshethram. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Uppiliappan Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Bhumidevi** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Srinivasan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | - |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Aarthi Pushkarni, Ahooraathra Pushkarni, Saranga Theertham, Surya Theertham and Indra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Suddhananda Vimanam and Vishnu Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | River Cauvery, Sage Markandeya, Garuda and Dharmadevata |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) to Lord Sri Oppiliappan Perumal has been rendered by the Alvars in their sacred hymns—Periyalvar in 2, Thirumangai Alvar in 34, and Nammalvar in 11 verses.<br>• Also called "Salts-less Kshetram" (Uppu Illa Kshetram). Only temple where all prasadam and offerings are prepared without salt, as per the Lord's own command - yet their taste remains unparalleled. |



Lord Sri Uppiliappan Perumal and Goddess Bhumidevi – Thiruvinnagar

# 14 Thirunaraiyur

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Sage Medhavi performed penance at this site and discovered an image of Chakratalvar entwined with Yoga Narasimha while bathing in the river. A divine voice instructed him to enshrine it in his hermitage. Around the same time, Goddess Niladevi, consort of Vishnu, appeared to the sage as a little girl under the Vanjula tree. Naming her Vanjulavalli, the sage raised her as his daughter until Vishnu, seeking His consort, arrived on Garuda and married her at the hermitage, agreeing to remain there at the sage's request. Another tradition holds that King Kochengat Cholan, guided by divine advice after defeat, built this temple—unique among his works since he otherwise constructed only Shiva shrines. The temple is also sanctified by Tirumangai Azhwar, who, having exhausted all his wealth in service to the Lord, came here in humility and pleaded for divine acknowledgment. The Lord appeared as an Acharya, performed Mudradanam by imprinting the conch and discus upon Azhwar's hands, and accepted him as His devotee. Hence, this Divyadesa is revered as the only temple where the Lord assumed the role of Guru to initiate a saint. In gratitude, Tirumangai Azhwar composed over a hundred hymns in praise of the Lord, calling Him "Nambi," one of flawless virtue. Thirunaraiyur is referred as Suganthagiri. Another unique feature of the shrine is Kal Garuda, the stone form of Vishnu's mount. Local tradition narrates that the sculptor's repeated attempts to fashion the idol were thwarted as Garuda would mysteriously fly away each time. Angered, the sculptor hurled a stone at the bird, wounding it, after which Garuda chose to remain at the temple in stone form, now worshiped as Kal Garuda. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vyugavasudevan Perumal (Thiru Naraiyur Nambi and Sugandhavananathan)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Vanjulavalli (Nambikai Nachiyar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Srinivasan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Vilva Vriksham, Vagullam (Magizham Tree) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Manimuktha Pushkarani, Sankarshana Theertham, Pradyumana Theertham, Aniruddha Theertham and Saamba Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Srinivasa Vimanam and Hema Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Medhavi, Lord Brahma, Tirumangai Azhwar, King Kochengat Cholan |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Thiru Naraiyur Nambi Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hundred and ten (110) hymn.<br>• One of the Divyadesam where Thayar's sanctity is considered higher than the Lord's — devotees must first offer prayers to Nachiyar. |

Lord Sri Vyugavasudeva Perumal and Goddess Vanchulavalli – Thirunaraiyur

# 15 Thirucherai

**Sthalapuranam:**

When the time came for the dissolution of the universe, Brahma grew anxious about safeguarding the Vedas and the essential aids for future creation. He prayed to Lord Vishnu, who instructed him to preserve them in a strong mud pot. After testing soil from various places, Brahma found only the sand of Thirucherai suitable to fashion the vessel. Thus, the Vedas were protected after the Mahapralaya, and this kshetra became renowned as Sara Kshetram, the holy ground of preservation. Because the soil here is rich in spiritual potency (saram), the presiding Lord is known as Saranathar, and the place, once called Tiru Charam, came to be known as Thirucherai. Another legend narrates that all the sacred rivers once approached Brahma to know which among them was supreme. Brahma recalled the Trivikrama incarnation of Vishnu, when He measured the worlds with His steps and sanctified the Ganga by placing His foot in her waters, thereby declaring her the holiest. Longing for equal glory, the goddess Kaveri performed austere penance. To test her devotion, Vishnu appeared as a child, and Kaveri cared for Him with motherly affection. Pleased, the Lord revealed to her all His ten incarnations and directed her to Sara Shetram, instructing her to bathe in the Sara Pushkarani, then in His majestic form with five consorts he gave his darshan. When she pleaded that He remain here eternally, Perumal consented and granted her a place within His own sanctum, where devotees may behold her presence even today. Lord further blessed her that during the sacred Tula month (October–November), her sanctity would surpass even that of the Ganga. The temple's history further records that King Azhagia Manavala Naicken once arranged for stones to be transported for the renovation of Mannargudi Sri Rajagopalaswami temple. On the way, the devotee Narasabhupalan humbly took one stone from each cart for Tirucherai's temple. When the king came to investigate, Perumal appeared before him in the very form of Rajagopalaswami, filling him with joy. Overwhelmed, the king undertook renovations here as well. This place is known as Panchasara Kshethram.

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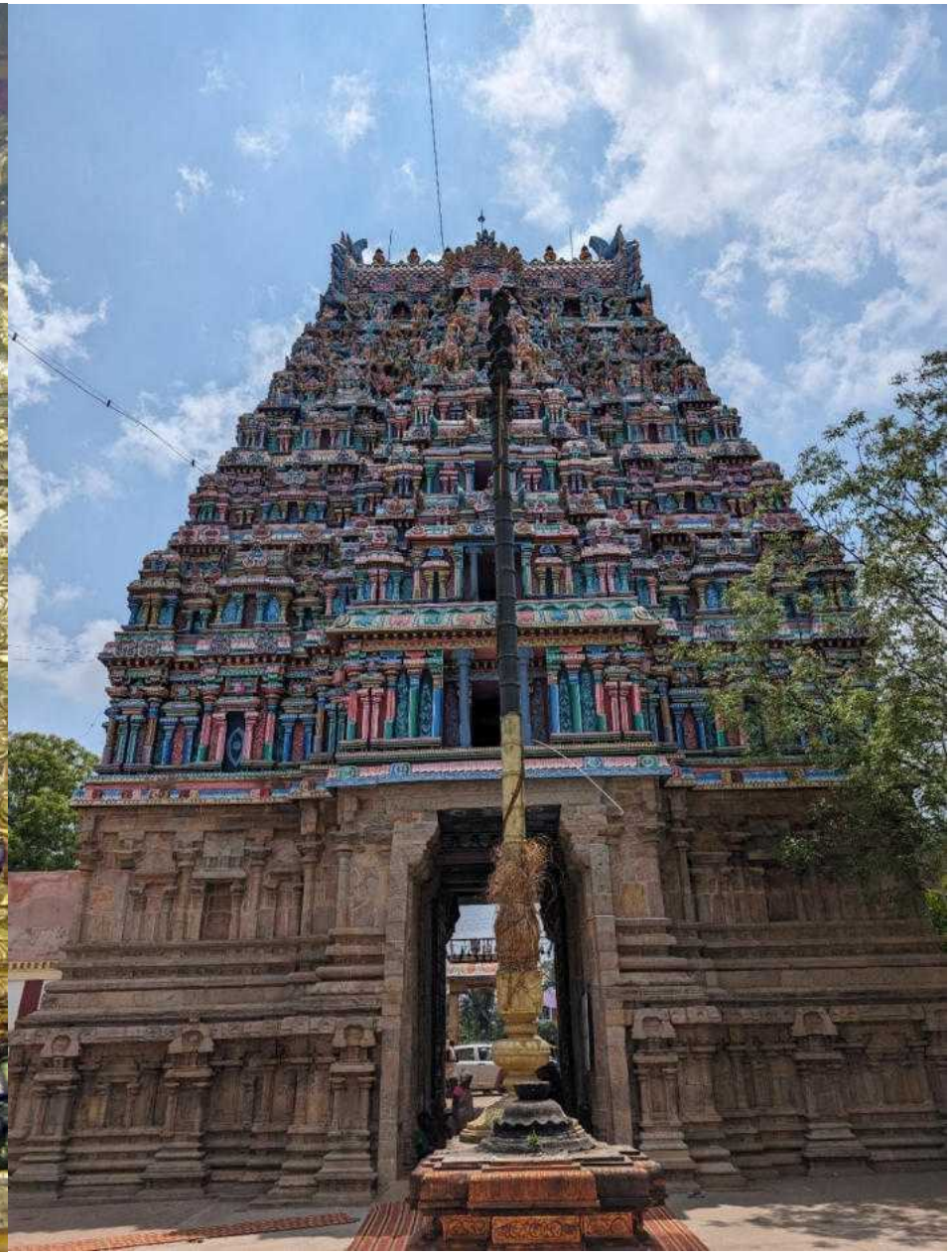
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Saranathan Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Sara Nachiyar (Sara Nayaki)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Saranathan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Sara Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Sara Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Narasabhupalan, Lord Brahma, Sage Markandeya, and River Kaveri |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Saranathan Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in Thirteen hymn.
- This temple is unique in that Perumal blesses devotees with five divine consorts—Sridevi, Bhoodevi, Mahalakshmi, Saranayaki, and Neeladevi.



Lord Sri Saranatha Perumal and Goddess Saranayaki - Thirucherai

# 16 Thirukannamangai

**Sthalapuranam:**

When the Ocean of Milk was churned by the devas and asuras, treasures and celestial beings arose, culminating in the appearance of Goddess Mahalakshmi. Overcome with shyness at Vishnu's radiance, she withdrew to Thirukannamangai to perform penance, seeking His hand in marriage. Responding to her devotion, Vishnu instructed Vishwaksena to determine the auspicious hour. With the arrival of that blessed moment, the Lord manifested before her, and their celestial wedding was celebrated with divine grandeur in the presence of the thirty-three crore devas. Because He emerged from the Milk Ocean to wed Mahalakshmi, the Lord here is adored as Perum Pura Kadal — "the Vast Ocean"— and the place is glorified as Lakshmi Vanam, the forest of Lakshmi's penance, and Krishna Mangala Kshetra, where their divine union took place. During the Vamana avatar, when the Lord raised His foot to the heavens, Brahma performed abhisheka with the water from his kamandalu. A drop of this sacred water fell here, giving birth to the Dharsana Pushkarini. Later, when Chandra, the moon-god, sought relief from a curse, he bathed in its waters and was freed. It was with this very water that the Lord performed abhisheka for Mahalakshmi, who thereby came to be known here as Abishekavalli Thayar.

Great Acharya Nadhamunigal and his disciple, Tirukannamangai Andan, whose life was dedicated to temple service. On one occasion, while chanting the Vedas, the disciple mystically assumed the form of a dog, entered the sanctum, and merged into the Lord as a radiant radiance. To commemorate his devotion, a festival is observed annually on the Tiruvonam star in the month of Aani (June–July). By virtue of fulfilling the six sacred criteria—Vimana, Aaranya, Mandap, Tirtha, River, and City sanctity—this temple is hailed as a Saptha Punya Kshetra or Sapthamrutha Kshetra, one of the rarest and holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu.

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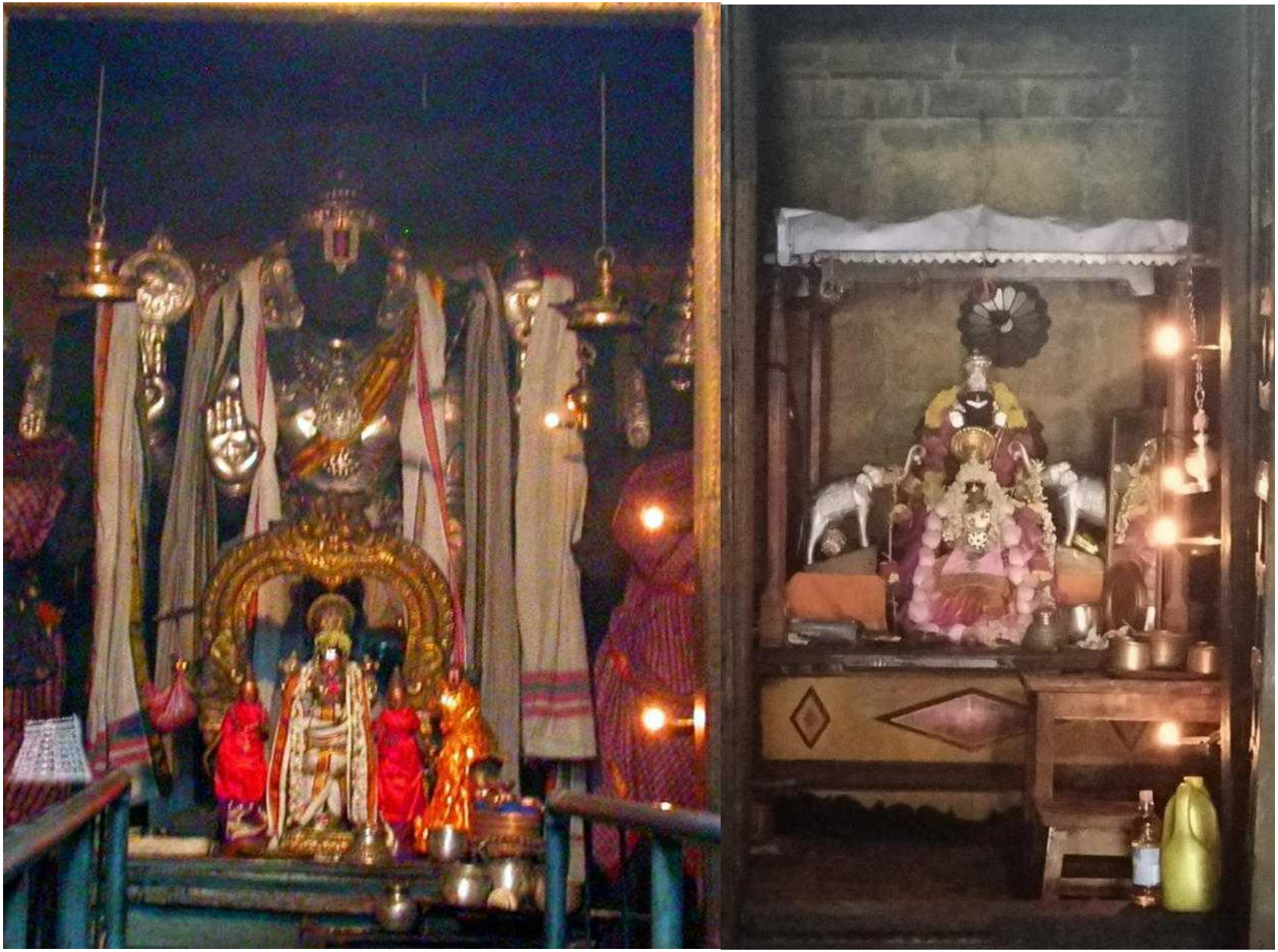
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Bakthavatsala Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Abishekavalli Thayar (Kannamangai Nayaki)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Perumpurakkadal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Dharsana Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Uthbala Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Mahalakshmi, Varuna, Sage Romasa, Chandra and Tirukannamangai Andan |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Saranathan Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in Fourteen hymn.
- The temple is one of the Panchakanna (Krishnaranya) Kshetrams, the five holy temples associated with Lord Krishna.



Lord Sri Bhaktavatsala Perumal and Goddess Abishekavalli - Thirukannamangai

# 17 Thirukannapuram

**Sthalapuranam:**

Sowriraja Perumal derives his name from an incident where the temple priest, Rangabhatta, unknowingly offered a garland worn by a courtesan to the deity. When confronted by the king, Vishnu appeared with a wig (sowri), proving the priest's innocence. The Padma Purana records that King Vasu, blessed with the power of flight, once attacked sages mistaking them for demons. Vishnu appeared as a youth, defeated him, and later agreed to marry his daughter Padmini. Another version states, long ago, sages performing severe penance at this site grew so frail that they resembled paddy stalks. King Uparisiravasu, blessed with the *Ashtakshara Mantra*, mistook them for food and attacked with his men. Vishnu appeared as a small boy, defeated the king's army, and even subdued the power of the mantra itself. Realizing the boy was the Lord, the king repented. Vishnu forgave him, revealed Himself as Neelamega Perumal, and at the king's request, agreed to reside there. The temple was then built by the king with the aid of the divine architect, Viswakarma. By virtue of fulfilling the six sacred criteria—Vimana, Aaranya, Mandap, Tirtha, River, and City sanctity—this temple is hailed as a Saptha Punya Kshetra or Sapthamrutha Kshetra, one of the rarest and holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu.

Another tradition states that the temple originally spanned seven enclosures stretching to the seashore. When a Chola ruler hostile to Vaishnavism attempted to destroy it, a devotee in anger hurled a discus at the deity, leaving a scar that remains visible. The presiding deity himself is also depicted hurling a discus against the king's forces. The temple's nightly offering of Muniyodharan Pongal is linked to two legends: one of a devotee named Muniyodharan who faithfully offered the dish daily until Vishnu appeared in his home to accept it, and another of a Chola feudatory, Muniyodharan Pillai, who spent tax revenues for the people's welfare during floods. When imprisoned, divine intervention led to his release, and the offering of Pongal became an enduring tradition.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kannapura Nayaki** and **Goddess Padmini** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Lord Sri Sowriraja Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Nithya Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Utpalavathaaga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Kanva, Garuda, Sage Dandaka, Muniyodharan Pillai, King Uparisiravasu, and Rangabhatta |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) to Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal has been rendered by the Alvars in their sacred hymns—Periyalvar in 1, Thirumangai Alvar in 104, Andal in 1, Kulasekhara Alvar in 11 verses, and Nammalvar in 11 verses.
- The temple is one of the Panchakanna (Krishnaranya) Kshetrams, the five holy temples associated with Lord Krishna.

Lord Sri Neelamegha (Sowriraja) Perumal and Goddess Kannapura Nayaki - Thirukannapuram

# 18 Thirukannangudi

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Sage Vashishta fashioned a deity of Krishna from butter and worshipped it for years. Pleased, Krishna appeared as a mischievous boy, swallowed the butter deity, and ran, leading Vashishta on a chase through Krishnaranya Kshetram or Panjakrishna Kshethram. When sages performing penance stopped Him, they sought the boon that He remain there in standing posture for devotees' darshan, thus the place came to be known as Kannangudi. The temple is also tied to both the Ramayana—where Krishna, unlike Rama who was Vashishta's disciple, becomes the Guru of Vashishta—and the Mahabharata, where Krishna, as in His childhood pastimes, was tied for eating butter, symbolizing how the Supreme can be lovingly bound by sincere devotees. Locally, the place is remembered by the saying "Kaya Magizh – Urangapuli – Thola Vazhaku – Oorakinaru – Thirukkannangudi", each phrase recalling its unique legends: the immortal Magizh tree where Krishna was tied, Nammalvar's penance under the tamarind, Thirumangai's victorious disputes, the ever-dry wells, and the temple's enduring sanctity. Once Thirumangai Azhwar, while returning with a golden Buddha idol to fund the Srirangam temple walls, rested here. Legends connect him with disputes over land (Thola Vazhaku, "case without defeat"), a curse that left wells of the town dry or salty, and divine intervention where the Lord Himself provided food and water to the weary saint. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Loganatha Perumal (Shyamalameni Perumal)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Loganayaki (Aravindavalli Nayaki)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Damodara Narayanan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Vagullam (Magizham Tree) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Sravana Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Utpala Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Vashishta, Sage Bhrigu, Sage Gautama, Lord Brahma, Uparisaravasu, and Thirumangai Azhwar |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Loganatha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.<br>• The temple is one of the Panchakanna (Krishnaranya) Kshetrams, the five (Thirukkannangudi, Kapisthalam, Thirukovilur, Thirukannamangai, and Thirukannapuram) holy temples associated with Lord Krishna. |

Lord Sri Loganatha Perumal and Goddess Loganayaki – Thirukannangudi

# 19 Thirunagai

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | A distributary of the river Cauvery, Odambokki—also called Virutha Kaveri—flows near the temple, giving the presiding deity the name Kaveri Thuraivan. The present-day Nagapattinam was once a dense forest, historically known as Soundararanya. Several legends are associated with this kshetram. During Satya Yuga, Markandeya Maharishi performed penance here and attained the Lord's vision. In Treta Yuga, Dhruva, son of King Uttanapada, came seeking dominion over the world. Yet, when Lord Vishnu appeared before him in a supremely beautiful form seated on Garuda, Dhruva's desire for kingship dissolved, and he instead sought salvation. In the same Yuga, Bhoomadevi also worshipped here. In Dwapara Yuga, Adisesha, the king of Nagas, performed austerities, receiving from Vishnu the boon of being His eternal resting couch—thus the place came to be called Nagar Pattinam. In Kali Yuga, Saleesa Chola undertook penance here. Other episodes add to the temple's sanctity. Two eunuchs, Kandan and Sukandan, regained physical strength after a sacred dip in Saara Pushkarani, the temple tank. Lord Brahma himself is said to have worshipped Vishnu at this spot. On the auspicious day of Masi Maham, Vishnu revealed His divine form on the banks of the tank, radiating such brilliance that He came to be called Azhagiyan Soundararajan, "the most beautiful one," while His consort became known as Soundaravalli. This place is known as Soundararanya Kshethram. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Soundaryavalli (Gaja Lakshmi)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Soundararajan Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Saara Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Soundarya Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Markandeya, Dhruva, Adisesha, Saleesa Chola, Tirumangai Alvar, Kandan and Sukandan |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |

Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal and Goddess Soundaryavalli - Thirunagai

# 20-1 Thiruthanjai Mamanikoil

**Sthalapuranam:**

The temples stand on the banks of the Vennaaru River, believed to be the celestial Viraja River of Vaikuntha. Sage Parasara established his hermitage here, sprinkling nectar from the milk ocean into the pond and performing penance. When three demons (Thanjakan, Dhandakan, and Gajamugan) troubled the sages, in answer to the call of Sage Parasara, Lord Vishnu first sent Garuda to destroy the asura armies and then manifested in three forms to vanquish the leaders. As Neelamegha Perumal, He slew Thanjakan, who requested that the land be named after him, which in time became Thanjavur. As Bhu Varaha, He destroyed Dhandakan, and as Narasimha in the form of a Yali, He killed Gajamugan, earning the name Thanjai Yali Nagar. In this Divya Desam, the Lord is present in three forms—Neelamegha Perumal with Sridevi, Manikundram Perumal with Bhudevi, and Narasimha Perumal with Niladevi. All three are seen in seated posture, and all three utsavars are known as Sriman Narayana, showing the unity of the divine in varied manifestations. Tradition holds that these temples once stood in different places around Thanjavur, but during the rule of the Nayakkars they were brought together in their present cluster, all facing towards the city. For this reason, the Lord is called Thanjai Mamani, the priceless treasure of Thanjavur. This place is also known as Paraasa Kshethram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal**
(*Sitting posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Raktapankajavalli (Sengamalavalli)**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):**

Narayana

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Amruta Theertham, Kannika Pushkarni and Vennaaru River

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Soundarya Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Sage Parasara

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in three hymn, Nammalvar in one hymn and Bhoothath Alvar in one hymn.
- This is the only Divyadesam where Lord Vishnu is enshrined in three (Neelamegha Perumal, Manikundram, and Thanjai Yali Narasimha) distinct sanctums, each in a different form. Collectively, the three temples are revered as a single Divyadesam.

Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal and Goddess Raktapankajavalli - Thiruthanjai Mamanikoil

# 20-2 Thirumanikundram

**Sthalapuranam:**

The temples stand on the banks of the Vennaaru River, believed to be the celestial Viraja River of Vaikuntha. Sage Parasara established his hermitage here, sprinkling nectar from the milk ocean into the pond and performing penance. When three demons (Thanjakan, Dhandakan, and Gajamugan) troubled the sages, in answer to the call of Sage Parasara, Lord Vishnu first sent Garuda to destroy the asura armies and then manifested in three forms to vanquish the leaders. As Neelamegha Perumal, He slew Thanjakan, who requested that the land be named after him, which in time became Thanjavur. As Bhu Varaha, He destroyed Dhandakan, and as Narasimha in the form of a Yali, He killed Gajamugan, earning the name Thanjai Yali Nagar. In this Divya Desam, the Lord is present in three forms—Neelamegha Perumal with Sridevi, Manikundram Perumal with Bhudevi, and Narasimha Perumal with Niladevi. All three are seen in seated posture, and all three utsavars are known as Sriman Narayana, showing the unity of the divine in varied manifestations. Tradition holds that these temples once stood in different places around Thanjavur, but during the rule of the Nayakkars they were brought together in their present cluster, all facing towards the city. This place is also known as Paraasa Kshethram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Manikundra Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Ambujavalli**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):** Narayana

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Sri Rama Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Manikkooda Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Markandeya and Sage Parasara

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Manikundra Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in three hymn, Nammalvar in one hymn and Bhoothath Alvar in one hymn.
- This is the only Divyadesam where Lord Vishnu is enshrined in three (Neelamegha Perumal, Manikundram, and Thanjai Yali Narasimha) distinct sanctums, each in a different form. Collectively, the three temples are revered as a single Divyadesam.

Lord Sri Manikundra Perumal and Goddess Ambujavalli – Thirumanikundram

# 20-3 Thanjaiyali Nagar

**Sthalapuranam:**

The temples stand on the banks of the Vennaaru River, believed to be the celestial Viraja River of Vaikuntha. Sage Parasara established his hermitage here, sprinkling nectar from the milk ocean into the pond and performing penance. When three demons (Thanjakan, Dhandakan, and Gajamugan) troubled the sages, in answer to the call of Sage Parasara, Lord Vishnu first sent Garuda to destroy the asura armies and then manifested in three forms to vanquish the leaders. As Neelamegha Perumal, He slew Thanjakan, who requested that the land be named after him, which in time became Thanjavur. As Bhu Varaha, He destroyed Dhandakan, and as Narasimha in the form of a Yali, He killed Gajamugan, earning the name Thanjai Yali Nagar. In this Divya Desam, the Lord is present in three forms—Neelamegha Perumal with Sridevi, Manikundram Perumal with Bhudevi, and Narasimha Perumal with Niladevi. All three are seen in seated posture, and all three utsavars are known as Sriman Narayana, showing the unity of the divine in varied manifestations. Tradition holds that these temples once stood in different places around Thanjavur, but during the rule of the Nayakkars they were brought together in their present cluster, all facing towards the city. For this reason, the Lord is called Thanjai Mamani, the priceless treasure of Thanjavur. In this kshetram, Sriman Narayana is worshipped as the protector of Thanjavur, holding the Sengol, a royal baton signifying His guardianship, while the goddess is revered as Thanjai Nayaki. The temple's vimanam is called Veda Sundara Vimanam, signifying the essence of the Vedas revealed here. This place is also known as Paraasa Kshethram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Narasimha Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Thanja Nayaki**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):** Narayana

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Surya Pushkarni, Sri Rama Theertham and Vennaaru River

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Veda Sundara Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Parasara and Sage Markandeya

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Narasimha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in three hymn, Nammalvar in one hymn and Bhoothath Alvar in one hymn.
- This is the only Divyadesam where Lord Vishnu is enshrined in three (Neelamegha Perumal, Manikundram, and Thanjai Yali Narasimha) distinct sanctums, each in a different form. Collectively, the three temples are revered as a single Divyadesam.

Lord Sri Narasimha Perumal and Goddess Thanjanayaki - Thanjaiyali Nagar

# 21 Thirunandhipura Vinnagaram (Nathan Kovil)

**Sthalapuranam:**

In the sacred forest of Shenbakaranyam near Kumbakonam, a unique confluence of legends sanctifies the temple of Nandipura Vinnagaram. It is said that Nandi, the divine bull of Lord Shiva, once failed to show due reverence to the gatekeepers of Vishnu, who in turn cursed him to suffer unbearable heat. Distraught, Nandi sought refuge in Lord Shiva, who instructed him to perform penance at Shenbakaranyam. At the same time, Goddess Lakshmi was also engaged in deep austerities there, seeking a permanent place in the heart of Lord Vishnu. Pleased with their devotion, Vishnu appeared, relieved Nandi of his curse, and accepted Lakshmi into His chest. In remembrance of this event, the Lord here is called Nadhanadha, the guide and teacher, and the place itself came to be known as Nandipura Vinnagaram. The sthala purana further recounts the pious sacrifice of King Sibi. When Indra, disguised as a hunter, pursued Agni who had taken the form of a pigeon, the bird sought refuge in Sibi's lap. To protect it, the king offered his own flesh equal to the pigeon's weight upon a balance. Witnessing such selfless devotion, Vishnu turned westward in this shrine—departing from His usual east-facing orientation—to honor Sibi's noble act. For this reason, the presiding deity, Lord Jagannathan, holds His weapons—the sword, bow, discus, staff, and conch—and faces west, blessing His devotees. In this both Nandi and Brahma are enshrined alongside the Lord within the sanctum. The temple, also known as Sundara Chola Vinnagaram due to the contributions of King Sundara Chola, has long been cherished by rulers and saints alike. Pallava king Nandivarman II, a contemporary of Thirumangai Alvar, was an ardent devotee, while the Alvar himself sang its glories. Because of its close resemblance in sanctity to the shrine of Lord Jagannath in Puri, this temple is celebrated as Dakshina Jagannatham—the Southern Jagannath.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Nadhanadha Perumal (Vinnagara Perumal, Yoga Srinivasan)** (*Sitting posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Shenbagavalli Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Jagannathan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Nandi Theertha Pushkarani |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Mantra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Nandi, Goddess Lakshmi, King Sibi and Lord Brahma |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Nadhanadha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |

Lord Sri Nadhanadha Perumal and Goddess Shenbagavalli - Thirunandhipura Vinnagaram (Nathan Kovil)

# 22 Thiruvelliyangudi

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Once when the Lord appeared as Vamana and sought three feet of land from the generous king Mahabali, his preceptor Shukra, foreseeing the divine play, tried to obstruct the charity. Taking the form of a tiny insect, he entered the spout of the vessel used for pouring water in ritual confirmation. To remove the obstruction, Vamana inserted a blade of grass, which pierced Shukra's eye and deprived him of vision. Seeking to regain it, Shukra wandered through many holy kshetras until he finally arrived here, where he worshipped the Lord and was blessed with restored sight. As Shukra is also known as Velli, the place itself came to be called Thiruvelliangudi. The temple still preserves this memory in the form of the sacred lamp known as Nethra Deepam, symbolizing the regained divine light. The legends also speak of the celestial architects Vishvakarma and Mayan, who once disputed over their craftsmanship. When Brahma declared Vishvakarma superior because he had constructed the abodes of demigods and Lord Vishnu, Mayan was advised to perform penance to gain a similar glory. Searching along the banks of the Kaveri, he discovered Thiruvelliangudi, where sage Markandeya was immersed in austerities. There, Mayan built a temple of incomparable beauty. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Vishnu manifested as Sringara Sundaran, the most beautiful form, granting Mayan the vision he longed for. In another account, Mayan prayed specifically for the vision of Rama, and the Lord, leaving His discus and conch with Garuda, appeared in that avatara-form to fulfill his wish. The temple has also been known by different names in each yuga, signifying its eternal sanctity—Brahma Putram in Satya Yuga, Parasaram in Treta Yuga, Sainthiranagaram in Dvapara Yuga, and Bhargavapuram in Kali Yuga. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Kolavilli Rama Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Maragadhavalli Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sringara Sundaran |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Kadhali (Plantain) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Shukra Theertham, Brahma Theertham, Indra Theertham and Parasara Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pushkala Vartaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Shukra, Lord Brahma, Indra, Sage Parasara, Sage Markandeya, Bhumidevi, and Mayan |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kolavilli Rama Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |

Lord Sri Kolavilli Rama Perumal and Goddess Maragadhavalli – Thiruvelliyangudi

# 23 Thiruvazhundur (Theranzhdur)

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | At Therazhundur, many sacred legends intertwine to reveal the glory of the place. King Uparichara Vasu, blessed by Brahma with a flying chariot, once passed over this region when, through divine will and the curse of sages, his chariot sank into the earth, giving the name Therazhundur, "where the chariot was immersed." Another tale tells of Brahma, who once drove away Krishna's cattle, only to find the Lord had effortlessly created another herd. Humbled, Brahma sought forgiveness, and Krishna consented to dwell here as Amaruviappan, portrayed in the sanctum amidst cows. It is also said that the Lord appeared here to console Prahlada, who trembled before the fierce form of Narasimha, and that the river goddess Kaveri performed penance here to be freed from a curse of sage Agastya. The Lord, showing compassion to gods, men, and sages alike, thus became known as Devadirajan. Because He yields like a cow to the love of His devotees, He was lovingly called Amaruviappan, "the tender one." To this day, Garuda stands beside Him in the sanctum, for Indra once gifted Garuda a crown and vimana, of which the vimana was offered here, now known as Garuda Vimanam. The river goddess Kaveri, having been cursed by sage Agastya, prayed to Lord Amaruviappan for relief. Pleased by her devotion, Lord Vishnu manifested here to grant her deliverance. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Devadiraja Perumal**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Senkamalavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Aamaruviyappan with Ubhaya Nachiyar |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Dharsana Pushkarni and Kaveri River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Garuda Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Uparichara Vasu, Lord Brahma, Prahlada, River Kaveri, Garuda and Sage Agastya |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kolavilli Rama Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in fourty-five hymn. |

Lord Sri Devadiraja Perumal and Goddess Senkamalavalli - Thiruvazhundur (Theranzhdur)

# 24 Thiruchirupuliyur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Once, Shiva instructed the sage Vyaghrapada to perform penance at Srirangam to seek a place in Vaikuntha. Accompanied by Patanjali, he lost his way and reached Krupa Samudram, modern Thirusirupuliyur. There they prayed to Vishnu for moksha, and the Lord appeared as Ranganatha. Because of the sages' old age, they could not behold His vast form, so He graciously manifested as Bala Shayanam, reclining like a small child. As the worshipper was in the form of a tiger, the place came to be known as Sirupuliyur, the dwelling of the small tiger. In the shrine, Sage Vyaghrapada is also seen at Lord's lotus feet in the sanctum. Here the Lord once gave refuge to Adisesha in his quarrel with Garuda, humbling the latter's pride and asking the serpent to curl beneath Him as His bed. Since then, it is said, Garuda never flies over this temple. Another legend tells how the disciples of sage Gautama were cursed to become lizards; their curse was lifted here when Indra came as Gajendra to worship Varadaraja. Thirumangai Azhwar once hesitated at the Lord's tiny form but was reminded of its unique grace, and was directed to Thirukkannamangai to behold His full majestic form. Inspired, the saint composed ten verses in praise of Kripasamudra (Arulmaakadalamudhu) Perumal, referring to Him as Sthala Shayana Perumal.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Arulmaakadalamudhu Perumal (Sri Arulmaakadal Perumal or Sri Sthala Shayana Perumal)**
*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing South)*

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Thirumaamagal Nachiyaar (Dayanayaki)**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):**

Krupasamudra Perumal

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Manasa Pushkarani and Ananthasaras

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Nandhavarthana Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Sage Vyaghrapada, Sage Patanjali, Sage Adisesha, Sage Garuda, Lord Indra, Sage Kanva and Sage Vyasa

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Arulmaakadalamudhu Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- The presiding deity, Arulmaakadalamudhu Perumal, lies in this rare Bala Shayanam posture, facing south, one of only two Divya Desams where the Lord reclines so, the other being Srirangam.
- This shrine is unique, as it is the only Divya Desam with a separate temple for Adisesha.

Lord Sri Arulmaakadalamudhu Perumal and Goddess Thirumaamagal – Thiruchirupuliyur

# 25 Thiruthalaichanga Nanmadiyam (Thalaichangadu)

**Sthalapuranam:**

When devas and demons churned the ocean of milk, Chandra, the radiant moon-god, emerged and was honored as the elder brother of Sri Mahalakshmi. In the cosmic order, he was placed next to the Sun. Another tradition states that he was born to Sage Atri and Anusuya, became the disciple of Brihaspati, and performed the great Rajasuya yajna. During this, he became involved with Tara, Brihaspati's wife, and their union produced Budha, later revered as a planet. For this offense, Brahma cursed Chandra with leprosy. Later, Chandra married Daksha's twenty-seven daughters, but favored only Rohini. Angered by his partiality, Daksha cursed him so that his brilliance would wane day by day. Stricken by both curses, seeking relief, Chandra surrendered to Lord Vishnu, who instructed him to bathe in the sacred waters of Srirangam, Tiru Indalur, and Thalaichanga Naanmadiyam, and to perform penance there. Obediently, Chandra followed these instructions, and at Thalaichanga Naanmadiyam, his prayers were answered. The Lord appeared before him, granted him relief from his sufferings, and, as a mark of divine favor, adorned him as an ornament upon His crown. Thus, this holy place became sanctified by the presence of the Moon-god, who received the Lord's grace here. The presiding deity came to be known as the one who bears the conch, and hence the place was called Thalaichangam, "the land of the conch." In this Divyadesam, Perumal manifests with the crescent moon adorning His head, resembling Lord Shiva, facing east in a standing posture. Hence, He is worshipped as Nanmadhia Perumal and also as Chandra Shaba Harar, the compassionate Lord who freed Chandra from his curse.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Chandrasaabahara (Naanmadiya or Venchuda) Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Thalaichanga Nachiyar (Senkamalavalli Thayar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Venchudarpiran Perumal or Vyomajothipiran or Lokanathan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chandra Pushkarani |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Chandra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Chandra (Moon God) and other demigods |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Naanmadiya Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in two hymn.

Lord Sri Chandrasaabahara Perumal and Goddess Thalaichanga Nachiyar - Thiruthalaichanga Nanmadiyam (Thalaichangadu)

# 26 Thiruindalur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiruindalur is the place where Chandra, the moon god, was finally relieved of his curse. The very name of the place reflects this legend, for "Indu" means moon, and thus the town came to be called Thiruindalur. Chandra performed his worship here, and the Lord, moved by his devotion, appeared before him and granted him release from his afflictions. Another account tells how Thirumangai Alvar once came to this temple. When he arrived, the doors were closed, yet he began to sing with deep feeling in praise of Parimala Ranganatha. Despite his continuous outpouring of hymns, the doors did not open, and at last, in a moment of frustration, he exclaimed that the Lord might as well keep the temple to Himself. At that very instant, the doors swung open, revealing the Lord's grace.

The deity here is known as Parimala Rangan, for He is said to be full of fragrance. He appears with four hands, and His connection with the sacred river Cauvery is celebrated in many ways. To honor her, He promised to elevate her status: at Srirangam, He made her His bed; at Thirucherai, He accepted her as His mother; and here at Thiruindalur, He bore her upon His head, giving her the same honor as the Ganga, who rests on the head of Lord Shiva. In the tradition of the holy abodes of Ranganatha, Srirangam is revered as Aadhi Arangam, the First Temple; Thirukudanthai is hailed as Madhya Arangam, the Middle Temple; and Thiruindalur is cherished as Andiya Arangam, the Last Temple. This Kshetram is known as Sugandhavana Kshethram.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Parimala Ranganatha Perumal (Sri Sugandhavana Nadhan)**<br>*(Veera Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Parimala Ranganayaki (Chandra Saabavimochanavalli)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Venchuda Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chandra (Indu) Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Vedachakra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Chandra (Moon God), Thirumangai Alvar and River Cauvery |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Parimala Ranganatha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in eleven hymn. |

Lord Sri Parimala Ranganatha Perumal and Goddess Parimala Ranganayaki – Thiruindalur

# 27 Thirukkavalambadi

**Sthalapuranam:**

The legends of the eleven temples of Thirunangur are all interwoven, tracing back to the time when Lord Shiva, overcome with fury after the death of his consort Uma during Daksha's sacrifice, began performing his fierce cosmic dance. With every strike of his matted locks upon the ground, eleven forms of Shiva emerged. Alarmed that such unbridled fury might consume the entire creation, the celestial beings sought refuge in Vishnu. The Lord appeared, and the sight of Him calmed Shiva's anger. In devotion, Shiva requested Vishnu to manifest Himself in eleven forms, just as he had done, and thus Vishnu appeared in eleven different manifestations across Thirunangur. These became the sites of the eleven sacred temples, each carrying a divine presence linked to this cosmic event.

Another legend connects the place with Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, who along with His consort Satyabhama, chose Thirunangur for their garden, finding it as splendid as Indra's celestial abode. The name "Kavalampadi" is associated with this place, for it is said Krishna once saved an elephant here, and also because "kavalam" signifies a small morsel of food, symbolizing the Lord's acceptance of the pure devotion of His worshippers as His true sustenance. Unique to this temple, there is no kitchen or madapalli, as the Lord here accepts only the offering of hearts filled with devotion. It is also said that when Krishna sought Parijata flowers to please Satyabhama, He meditated upon Shiva, who revealed that a lake filled with these divine blossoms lay in this very kshetra. Because of this association, the shrine is considered equivalent to Dwaraka, with the Lord enshrined here alongside both Rukmini and Satyabhama. The temple also holds significance for other celestial beings. Vishwaksena, the commander of the Lord's eternal associates, received His vision here. Born of Kundali, the daughter of Lord Varuna, and Rudra, Vishwaksena performed great penance and was appointed as the chief of the Nityasuris in Vaikuntha. He prayed here for a vision of Krishna, and the Lord blessed him with that darshan. Rudra too, having once incurred the sin of killing Brahma, came here to pray for deliverance from the Brahmahatya dosha.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Gopala Krishna Perumal (Rajagopalan) with Rukmini and Satyabhama**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Senkamala Nachiyar (Madavaral Mangai)**

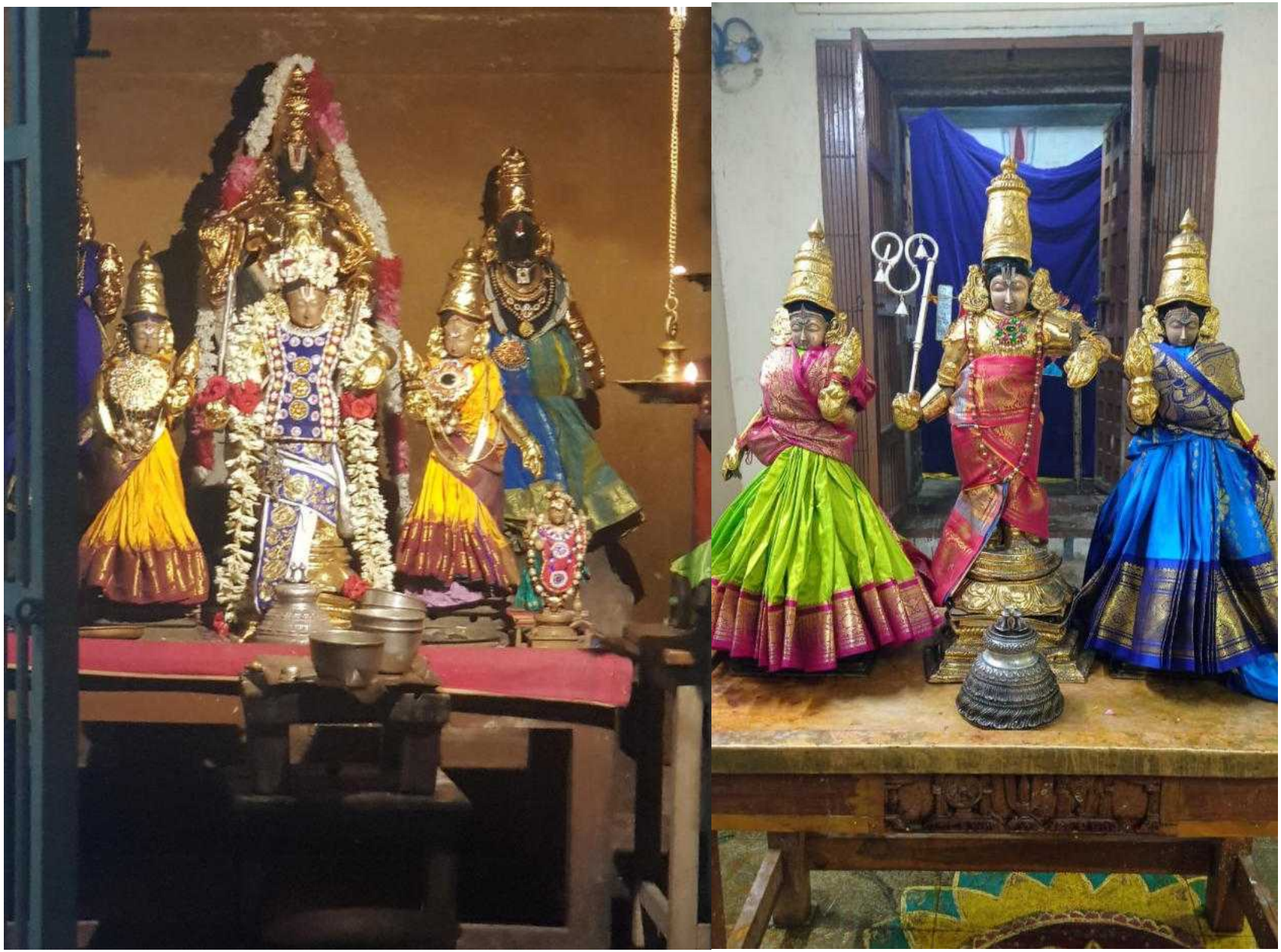
**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Thadamalarpoigai

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Swayambhu Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Lord Shiva, Vishwaksena and Tirumangai Alvar

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Gopala Krishna Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.



Lord Sri Gopala Krishna Perumal and Goddess Senkamala Nachiyar - Thirukkavalambadi

# 28 Thirukazhicheerama Vinnagaram (Sirkazhi)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Sage Romasa once performed penance here to behold the Trivikrama form of the Lord. When the Lord appeared, one foot raised to measure the worlds, He blessed the sage with a lifespan greater than Brahma's, declaring that each hair falling from Romasa's body would reduce Brahma's life by a year. Humbled, Brahma surrendered, and the Lord remained here in His Trivikrama form. It is believed that this was the very place where He first placed His foot during the Vamana avatara. Even today, only the Lord's left foot is seen daily, while His right foot is revealed only once a year on Vaikunta Ekadasi.

Once when the temple lay in ruins, an old woman safeguarded the utsava murti of Thadalan in a husk pot and offered her humble worship. At the same time, Thirumangai Alvar passed through the place after visiting Chidambaram. His praises angered the disciples of Thiru Gnana Sambandhar, who challenged him to prove his worth in debate. That night the Lord appeared in Thirumangai's dream, asking him to first retrieve Thadalan from the old woman. Later, in debate with Sambandhar, Thirumangai composed ten moving verses in praise of Vishnu, which astonished the Saiva saint. Overcome with joy, Sambandhar crowned him Thirumangai Azhvar, gifting him a Vel from Parvati and an anklet, a symbol of harmony between Saivism and Vaishnavism. It is further believed that this was the Sidhasrama where sage Vishvamitra conducted his yagna. This temple is praised in the Brahmanda Purana as Patalika Vanam and Uttama Kshetram. The Bhagavata Purana recounts that Lord Vishnu descended as Vamana to restore Indra's authority, which had been taken by the benevolent asura king Mahabali, grandson of Prahlada. The legend is linked to Thrikkakara Temple in Kerala, as well as to Ulagalantha Perumal Temples at Tirukoyilur and Kanchipuram, where the Lord is worshiped as Trivikrama, and the site is known as Trivikrama Kshetram.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal (Sri Manalantha Thadalan)**<br>(*Standing posture* - measuring the world - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Lokanayaki (Mattavizhkuzhali)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Trivikrama Narayana |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Shanka Pushkarani and Chakra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pushkalavartha Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Romasa and Tirumangai Alvar |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- The temple is one among the five Vinnagarams glorified in the paasurams of Thirumangai Azhvar, who also invokes the goddess here. Sri Andal fondly called Him Thadalan, the One who measured the earth.

Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal and Goddess Lokanayaki - Thirukazhicheerama Vinnagaram

# 29 Thiruarimeya Vinnagaram

**Sthalapuranam:**

The sacred temples of Thirunangur are bound together by a single divine legend. When Sati, consort of Shiva, perished in Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva was consumed by grief and fury. In His cosmic rage, He danced violently, and with each strike of His matted locks upon the ground, eleven Rudra forms emerged. The devas trembled in fear that this fury would burn all of creation, and they sought refuge in Lord Vishnu. At the Lord's appearance, Shiva's wrath subsided, and in devotion he prayed that Vishnu too might manifest in eleven forms. Granting his wish, Vishnu appeared in eleven different manifestations across Thirunangur, each becoming a holy temple, forever uniting the two deities in this cosmic event. Among these, Arimeya Vinnagaram, meaning "the place where Hari resides," holds a unique sanctity. The story of Sage Uthanga reveals a life of unwavering devotion and divine testing. A noble brahmana and avadhuta, he wandered in detachment, absorbed in Krishna's service, and was often blessed with the Lord's visions—even once beholding His cosmic form. When Krishna urged him to accept a boon, Uthanga asked only that water be available whenever he was thirsty, which the Lord granted. Yet when Krishna appeared disguised as a chandala offering nectar in a leather pouch, Uthanga, bound by rigid notions, refused, only to later realize it was the Lord Himself teaching that true vision is to see divinity in all. Humbled, he begged forgiveness, desiring only lifelong service. From youth, his devotion was similarly tested—such as when he sought earrings as guru-dakshina, encountering the Lord in many guises who tested and blessed his sincerity. From that time onward, his heart longed only to behold Krishna as a simple cowherd boy. It was here at Arimeya Vinnagaram that the compassionate Lord fulfilled that longing. Appearing as a divine dancer with a pot, He revealed Himself as Sri Kudamadukuthan Perumal, the playful Gopala, giving Uthanga peace and joy.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Kudamudakoothan Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Amrudhagadavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Chathurbuja Gopalan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kodi Theertham and Amrutha Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ucchasrunga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Uthanga and Lord Shiva |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kudamudakoothan Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- The temple is one among the five Vinnagarams glorified in the paasurams of Thirumangai Azhvar.

Lord Sri Kudamudakoothan Perumal and Goddess Amrudhagadavalli - Thiruarimeya Vinnagaram

# 30 Thiruvanpurushothamam

**Sthalapuranam:**

After the death of his consort Uma during Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva was overcome with grief and fury and began a terrible dance at this very place. Each time his matted locks struck the ground, a new form of Shiva arose, and thus eleven Rudras were born. Fearing that this fury might consume the worlds, the devas prayed to Vishnu. At His appearance, Shiva's anger subsided, and he requested the Lord to manifest in eleven forms as he had done. Granting the request, Vishnu appeared in eleven different manifestations, and these became the sacred sites of the eleven temples of Thirunangur. Some traditions say the purpose of Vishnu's eleven forms was to bring under control the eleven Rudras. It is also believed that Indra, along with the Ekadasa Rudras, worshipped Vishnu at this temple. Sage Vyaghrapada who once came here with his little son Ubamanyu. Leaving the child at the temple entrance, he went to collect flowers for the Lord. The hungry child began to cry, and the sound reached the Lord reclining on the ocean of milk. Out of compassion, the Lord created the very milk ocean at this spot, and Mother Purushothama Nayaki fed the child herself. As the Lord had granted the gift of the celestial milk ocean to the sage's son, the temple tank here came to be called Thiruppaarkadal Theertham. The temple's vimana is named Sanjeevi Vigraha Vimanam, recalling the divine herb Sanjeevani that once revived even Lord Rama's cause in battle.

Tradition further holds that the great saint Thirumangai Alvar himself visits during the annual festival to consecrate the eleven deities. Local belief says that the fresh winds rustling across the paddy fields on the eve of the festival are a sign of a bountiful harvest. It is also said that sages Madanga, Domya, Vyaghrapada, and Udanga once established their hermitages here. The Mahabharata records that Takshaka, the mighty serpent king who slew King Parikshit, ruled this land once known as Nagapuri, which in time became Nangur.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Purushottama Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Purushotthama Nayaki**

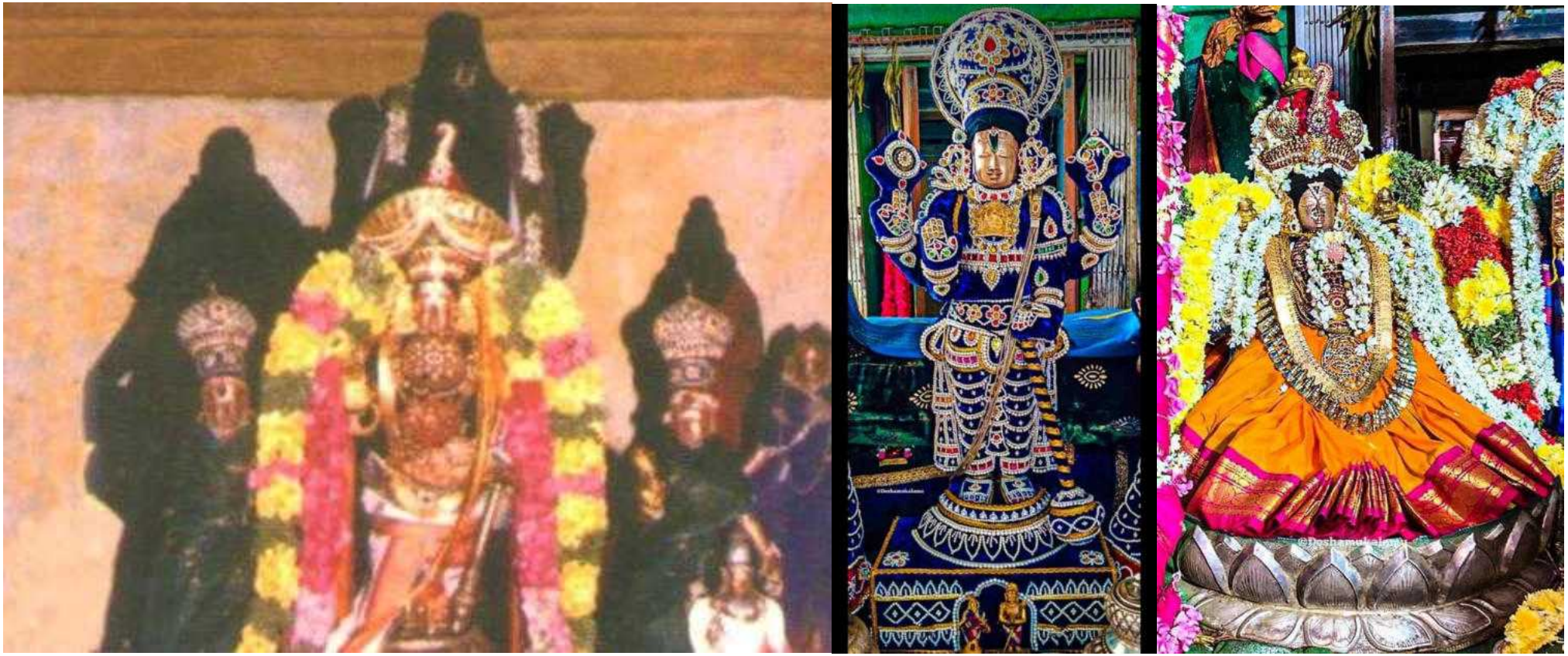
**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Thiruppaarkadal Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Sanjeevi Vigraha Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Madanga, Sage Domya, Sage Vyaghrapada, Sage Udanga, and Lord Shiva

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Purushottama Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.



Lord Sri Purushottama Perumal and Goddess Purushotthama Nayaki – Thiruvanpurushothamam

# 31 Thirusemponsaikoil

The legends of the eleven temples of Thirunangur are inseparably bound together, tracing their origin to the time when Lord Shiva, stricken with grief and fury over the death of his consort Uma during Daksha's sacrifice, began a fierce cosmic dance at this very place. Each time his matted locks struck the ground, a new form of Shiva emerged, and soon eleven Rudras had manifested. Alarmed that the worlds might be destroyed, the celestial beings prayed to Vishnu. At His appearance, Shiva's anger subsided, and in devotion, he requested the Lord to manifest in eleven forms just as he had done. Vishnu granted the request, and thus His eleven forms became enshrined in the eleven sacred temples of Thirunangur.

**Sthalapuranam:**

It is said that after slaying Ravana, Lord Rama came here and, in gratitude, fashioned a golden idol of a cow which he gifted to a Brahmin of the hermitage of Sage Dranethra. From this offering, the place came to be called Thiruchemponsey, "the place of pure gold." With the wealth thus received, the Brahmin is believed to have built the temple. In ancient times, a Brahmin named Mukunda, son of Sage Kashyapa, performed intense devotion here, chanting the Ashtakshara mantra thirty-two thousand times. The Lord, pleased, granted him immense wealth, earning for Himself the name Perarulalan, the most generous giver of grace and fortune, who bestows His blessings alongside Lord Shiva. To symbolize this inexhaustible generosity, lilies—associated with the Goddess—are said to bloom even at night, and thus the divine consort here is called Alli Mamalar Nachiar. This sacred place is also known as Hema Rangam, Nagapuri, and Nangai Nagaram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Hemaranganatha Perumal (Semponna Rangar** or **Perarullan)**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Sweda Pushpavalli (Alli Mamalar Nachiyar)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Hema Pushkarni and Kanaka Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Kanaka Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Dranethra, Brahmin Mukunda and Lord Shiva

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Hemaranganatha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- Tradition holds that Azhagiya Manavalar, the presiding deity of the great temple at Trichy, descended here at Shiva's request. Thirumangai Azhwar, in his hymns, declares that he beheld within this Perumal the very presence of Srirangam Ranganatha, Thirupati Venkatesa, and Kanchi Varadaraja, so that worshipping here is regarded as equal to worshipping all three together.

Lord Sri Hemaranganatha Perumal and Goddess Sweda Pushpavalli – Thirusemponsaikoil

# 32 Thirumanimadakoil

**Sthalapuranam:**

The legends of the eleven temples of Thirunangur are deeply interlinked. It is said that after the death of his consort Uma at the yajna of Daksha, Shiva, overcome with grief and fury, began to dance here. Each time his matted locks struck the earth, a new form of Shiva appeared, until eleven had manifested. Fearing that this destructive dance would consume the worlds, the celestial beings prayed to Vishnu. Responding to their plea, Vishnu appeared at the spot. At the sight of Vishnu, Shiva's wrath subsided, and he humbly requested Vishnu to assume eleven forms just as he had. Fulfilling his request, Vishnu manifested in eleven distinct forms across Thirunangur, which later became the sites of the eleven sacred temples.

Here at Thirumanimadakoil, Vishnu is worshipped as Nara Narayana, the Lord who is at once both teacher and student, imparting knowledge to Himself, as in Badrinath. The temple is also called Mani Maada Kovil, likened to a great lamp-stand, where the Lord Himself is the Nanda Vilakku—the ever-burning lamp of divine wisdom, shedding the light of Pranava Jnana upon the world. Indra, king of the gods, is said to have worshipped Vishnu here and received His darshan, while the eleven Rudras also attained His grace. Legends further state that Badrinarayana Himself descended to bless Sage Matanga at this place.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Sashvatha Deepaya Narayana Perumal (Nara Narayana Perumal** or **Nanda Vilakku Perumal)**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Pundareegavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Allaththarkariyaan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Indra Pushkarni and Rudra Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pranava Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Indra, Lord Shiva, and Sage Matanga |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Narayana Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in twelve hymn.
- This is the only temple in the South dedicated to Lord Badri Narayana, whose original abode is in the Himalayas of the North.

Lord Sri Sashvatha Deepaya Narayana Perumal and Goddess Pundareegavalli – Thirumanimadakoil

# 33 Thiruvaikunta Vinnagaram

**Sthalapuranam:**

The legends of the eleven temples of Thirunangur are deeply connected. It is said that after the death of his consort Uma at Daksha's yagna, Shiva was overcome with fury and began to dance here. Each time his matted locks touched the earth, another form of Shiva appeared, until eleven had manifested. The gods feared that if this dance continued, creation itself would be destroyed, so they prayed to Vishnu for help. Vishnu appeared, and at the sight of Him Shiva's anger subsided. Out of reverence, Shiva requested Vishnu to also manifest in eleven forms, and the Lord obliged. These became the sacred sites of the eleven Divya Desams of Thirunangur. Here at Vaikunta Vinnagaram, sages like Udhanga Maharishi and King Uparisaravasu were blessed with the Lord's darshan as He is seen in Vaikuntha. The temple's sacred waters are identified with the Viraja River, believed to flow along the borders of Vaikuntha itself. Another story tells of King Swetaketu of the Ikshvaku dynasty, known for his honesty and love for his people. With his queen Damayanthi, he longed for the vision of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. After completing his royal duties, he renounced the world and, together with his queen, undertook severe penance by standing amidst fire and gazing at the sun until they shed their mortal bodies and reached Vaikuntha. Yet, they were unable to behold the Lord there and grew sorrowful. At that moment, Sage Narada appeared and explained that although their penance was severe, they had neglected small acts of homa and charity, and thus could not attain darshan. As remedy, he directed them to worship Lord Iravadeswarar on the banks of the Cauvery, for only through Him could their wish be fulfilled. Swetaketu and Damayanthi prayed earnestly to Iravadeswarar, who in turn confessed that he too was waiting for Perumal's darshan. He invited them to join him in penance, which they did. Soon Sage Udhanga Maharishi also joined, and the four together worshipped with deep devotion. At last, Vishnu appeared before them with Sridevi and Bhoodevi. Lord Iravadeswarar prayed that the place of this divine manifestation be forever known as Vaikunda Vinnagaram, and that the Lord be worshipped here as Vaikunda Nathar, with His consort praised as Vaikundavalli. Thus, Perumal manifested here as Vaikunda Vasan, granting to devotees on earth the same darshan as in Vaikuntha itself.

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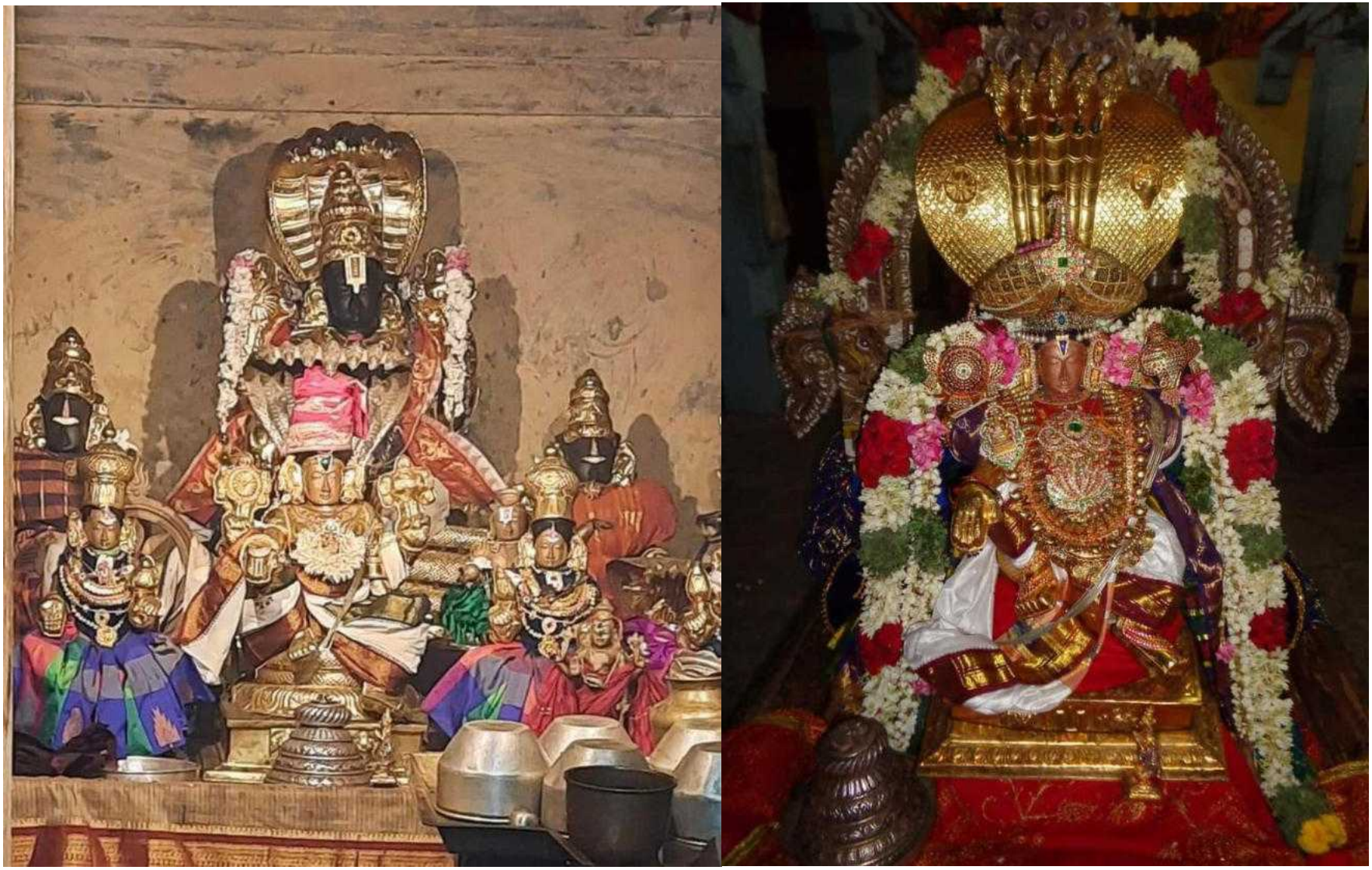
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal (Thamaraikannudaiyapiran)**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Vaikundavalli** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Lakshmi Pushkarni, Udhanga Pushkarni, Viraja Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Anantha Satya Varthaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Udhanga, King Uparisaravasu, Lord Shiva, King Swetaketu and Damayanthi |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- The temple is one among the five Vinnagarams glorified in the paasurams of Thirumangai Azhvar.



Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal and Goddess Vaikundavalli - Thiruvaikunta Vinnagaram

# 34-1 Thiruvali

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to legend, Lord Vishnu incarnated as Narasimha to slay the demon Hiranyakashipu, who oppressed the world despite a boon from Brahma. To protect his devotee Prahlada, the Lord emerged from a pillar at dusk, half-lion and half-man, and killed the tyrant at the threshold. His fury subsided only when Lakshmi embraced Him, and the place was named Thiruvali, the land of the divine embrace.

Nearby Thirunagari was the birthplace of Thirumangai Azhwar, first known as Neelan, a warrior later made ruler of Aali Nadu. He fell in love with Kumudhavalli, a maiden born on earth by a sage's curse. She would only marry him if he became a devout Vaishnava and vowed to feed 1008 devotees daily. Neelan surrendered to the Lord at Thirunaraiyur, fulfilled her condition, and married her. When his wealth was exhausted, he even discovered hidden treasure by divine grace, but later turned to robbing the rich to continue his service.

One night he tried to plunder a bridal couple, who were in truth Lord Narayana and Lakshmi in disguise. Their ornaments became immovable, and when Thirumangai accused the groom of sorcery, the Lord revealed the Ashtakshara mantra, transforming him into Nam Kaliyan, beloved of the Lord. The place of this encounter is still honored, and because the Lord is enshrined at Thirunagari while Thirumangai praised Him as the Lord of Thiruvali, the two are revered together as one Divya Desam.

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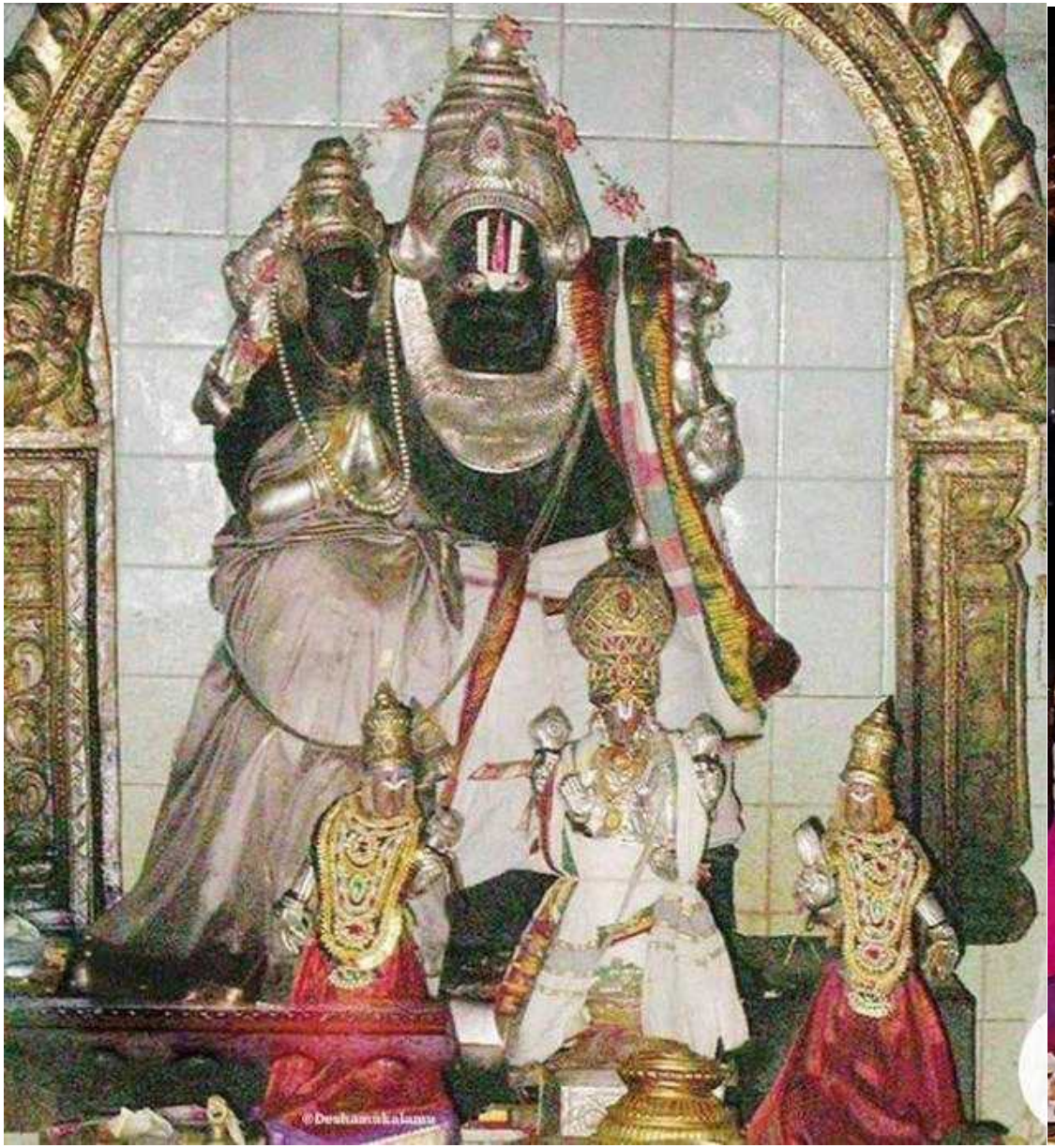
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Kedarapathivaraya Perumal (Vayalali Manavalan** or **Lakshmi Narasimha)**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Amrudhagadavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Thiruvalinagaralan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Aladhani Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ashtakshara Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Thirumangai Azhwar and Karthama Prajapati |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vayalali Manavalan Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar.
- The Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Perumal Temple here is also one among the five sacred Pancha Narasimha Kshetrams of this region, the others being Kuraiyalur Ugra Narasimha, Mangaimadam Veera Narasimha, Thirunagari Yoga Narasimha, and Thirunagari Hiranya Narasimha.



Lord Sri Kedarapathivaraya Perumal and Goddess Amrudhagadavalli – Thiruvali

# 34-2 Thirunagari

A legend tells of Karthama Prajapati, son of Brahma, who performed penance here seeking moksha. Vishnu tested him severely, and when Lakshmi was displeased, she hid herself in the lotus tank of this place. The Lord searched for her, found her, and embraced her, later taking her back to Vaikuntha. Hence, the place became known as Aalingapuri (place of the embrace), also called Sripuri, and eventually Thirunagari. Karthama was told by Vishnu that his liberation would come only in Kali Yuga. Accordingly, he was reborn as Sangabalan, a prince. He fell in love with Kumudhavalli, who would only marry him if he pledged to feed 1000 Vaishnavites daily. Sangabalan agreed, but when he lacked resources, he turned to theft. On one such occasion, he encountered Vishnu and Lakshmi disguised as a bridal couple. Attempting to rob them, he was instead initiated into the Ashtakshara mantra by the Lord Himself and transformed into Thirumangai Azhwar.

**Sthalapuranam:**

Here, Vishnu revealed Himself in the form of Kalyana Ranganatha, granting darshan to Thirumangai and Kumudhavalli. Thus, this temple uniquely enshrines the Lord as Kalyana Ranganatha in a seated posture, with an Ashtanga vimana above the sanctum. Stucco deities on the vimana depict the Dashavatara and forms like Lakshmi Narasimha and Lakshmi Narayana. Two forms of Narasimha worshipped by Thirumangai—Yoga Narasimha and Hiranya Narasimha—are housed in this temple, believed to be among the five original images personally worshipped by the Azhwar. The temple is also called Azhwar Koil and Vedarajapuram, as Thirumangai Azhwar's golden deity, made at Thirukurungudi before he attained moksha, was later brought here and is still worshipped daily. Nearby stands the Mangai Mutt Mandapam, where Thirumangai once fed 1000 Vaishnavites to fulfill Kumudhavalli's condition. Apart from the presiding deities, there is a form of Vishnu worshipped by Thirumangai alvar in his hunter guise, Sindanaikkiniyaan.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vedaraja (Kalyana Ranganatha) Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Amurdha Valli (Poornavalli or Ranga Nayaki)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Kalyana Ranganatha |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Ilakshani Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Astakshara or Ashtanga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Goddess Lakshmi, Thirumangai Azhwar and Karthama Prajapati |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vedaraja (Kalyana Ranganatha) Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in Fourty one (41) hymn and Kulasekhara Alvar in one hymn.
- This is the only Divya Desam where Perumal manifests as Kalyana Ranganatha in a seated posture, and where Thirumangai Azhwar is uniquely honored along with his consort Kumudhavalli.

Lord Sri Vedaraja (Kalyana Ranganatha) Perumal, Goddess Amurdha Valli and Thirumangai Azhwar with his consort Kumudavalli – Thirunagari

# 35 Thiruthevanarthogai

**Sthalapuranam:**

The eleven temples of Tirunangur are closely interconnected through legend. After the death of his consort Sati (or Uma, in another version) due to Daksha's yajna, Lord Shiva was overcome with fury and began a cosmic dance at this site. With each strike of his matted locks on the ground, eleven forms of Shiva emerged. The celestial beings feared that this uncontrolled dance could destroy creation and prayed to Vishnu for help. Vishnu appeared and calmed Shiva's anger. At Shiva's request, Vishnu manifested in eleven forms, corresponding to the eleven temples of Tirunangur. These temples were revered by sages and celestial beings alike.

Devanaar Thogai (Thiruthevanar Thogai) is where Lord Vishnu married Goddess Lakshmi, who emerged from the Thiruppaarkadal (milky ocean). The place is also called Devanaar Thogai due to the congregation of devas who worshipped Lord Vishnu here. Sage Vasishta meditated here and received blessings from Madhava Perumal. While the Ekadasa Rudras and Indra, king of the devas, are also said to have offered their prayers. This place is also known as Thirunangur Kizhasalai.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Deiva Nayaka (Madhava) Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Samudradanaya (Kadalmagal Nachiyar) and Goddess Bhoodevi** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | **Madhava Perumal and Madhava Nayaki** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Shobana Pushkarani or Devasabha Pushkarani |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Shobana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Vasishta, Lord Shiva and Indra along with other demigods |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Deiva Nayaka Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- The Lord is depicted in marriage posture. As this temple is considered a Marriage Parihara Sthalam, blessing devotees seeking matrimonial and progeny-related boons.

Lord Sri Deiva Nayaka Perumal and Goddess Samudradanaya – Thiruthevanarthogai

# 36 Thiruthetriambalam

The eleven temples of Tirunangur are deeply interconnected through legend. Following the death of his consort Sati (or Uma, in some versions) during the Daksha yajna, Lord Shiva began a furious cosmic dance at this site. With every strike of his matted hair on the ground, eleven forms of Shiva manifested. Concerned that this dance could destroy creation, the celestial deities prayed to Vishnu for intervention. Vishnu appeared and calmed Shiva's anger, who requested Vishnu to manifest in eleven forms. These eleven forms correspond to the eleven temples of Tirunangur.

**Sthalapuranam:**

Demon Hiranyaksha stole the Earth and hid in the underworld (Padala Loka). The sages and devas appealed to Vishnu for help. Vishnu assumed his Varaha (boar) incarnation, defeated the demon, and restored Earth to its rightful place. He returned to Palasavanam, where he was joined by Shiva and Mother Mahalakshmi, granting darshan and resting with his eyes half-closed in peace. Hence, he is revered as Senganmal Ranganathar, the Lord with red eyes. The place also obtained the name Thiruthetriambalam. Several sages—including Agastya, Bharadvaja, Gautama, and the deity Varuna—are believed to have performed penance here. The presiding deity of Srirangam is said to have visited at Shiva's request.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Lakshmiranga Perumal (Senkkanmaal or Ranganathan or Pallikonda Perumal)**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Rakthapankajavalli (Sengamalavalli or Bhujangavalli)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Surya Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Veda Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Agastya, Sage Bharadvaja, Sage Gautama, Varuna, Lord Shiva and Goddess Lakshmi |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Lakshmiranga Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- This is the only temple among other than Malainadu Divyadesams referred to as Ambalam (Temple). Worship here is considered equivalent to worshipping Srirangam Perumal. The Lord reclines on Adisesha with four arms, with Sridevi at his head and Bhoodevi at his feet.

Lord Sri Lakshmiranga Perumal and Goddess Rakthapankajavalli – Thiruthetriambalam

# 37 Thirumanikoodam

**Sthalapuranam:**

The eleven temples of Tirunangur are interlinked through legend. After the death of his consort Uma during the Daksha yajna, Lord Shiva began a furious cosmic dance at this site. Each time his hair touched the ground, eleven forms of Shiva appeared. Fearing the destruction of creation, the celestial deities prayed to Vishnu, who appeared and pacified Shiva. On Shiva's request, Vishnu manifested in eleven forms at Tirunangur, giving rise to the eleven temples, including Thirumanikudam. The eleven Rudras (Ekadas Rudras) and Indra are believed to have worshipped Vishnu here.

According to legend of Thirumanikoodam, Thakkan (Daksha) had 27 daughters, all married to the Moon. The Moon favored Rohini over the others, prompting Thakkan to curse him to wane daily. To relieve the Moon from this curse, he sought Vishnu's grace and finally arrived at Thirumanikudam. Lord Vishnu appeared as Varadharaja Perumal and removed the Moon's curse, hence the temple's association with Chandra Pushkarani, the sacred tank. The Lord of this place wears the Moon (Chandran) as His ornament and has Garuda as His vahana (vehicle). He granted special darshan to both Lord Chandra and Garuda here.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Varadharaja Perumal (Manikooda Nayakan)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Thirumamagal Nachiyar (Sridevi) and Goddess Bhoodevi** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chandra Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kanaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Chandra (Moon God), Lord Shiva and Garuda |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Varadharaja Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |

Lord Sri Varadharaja Perumal and Goddess Bhunayagi – Thirumanikoodam

# 38 Thiruvellakulam (Annan Kovil)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The eleven temples of Thirunangur are interconnected by a common legend. After the death of his consort Uma during Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva, in great fury, danced at this place, and from each touch of his hair to the ground, eleven forms of Shiva appeared. Fearing cosmic destruction, the celestial beings prayed to Vishnu, who appeared and pacified Shiva. At Shiva's request, Vishnu manifested in eleven forms, which correspond to the eleven temples of Thirunangur. Swetharaja, son of Thunthumaran of the Surya Vamsa, who was destined to live only nine years, was blessed with a long life by Lord Srinivasa after worshipping here, bathing in the Swetha Pushkarani, and performing Mrityunjaya mantra chanting. This temple is also the birthplace of Sri Kumudhavalli Nachiyar, who later married Thirumangai Mannan (Tirumangai Azhwar) after he fulfilled her divine conditions. A separate shrine for Kumudhavalli Nachiyar stands within the temple. Thirumangai Azhwar visited the shrine, had darshan of the Lord, and praised Him as though seeing Lord Srinivasa himself. He described this Perumal as the elder brother of Tirupati Srinivasa. Devotees believe that those unable to visit Tirupati can worship here, where the Lord, together with Alar Mel Mangai Thayar, fulfills their wishes. This is the only Divya Desam where both Perumal and Thayar share the same names as in Tirupati. Offerings made to Thiruvenkatamudayan at Tirupati can also be offered here. Thirumangai Azhwar uniquely referred to only two deities as "Anna"—the Lord of Tirupati and this Perumal. This temple is popularly known as Annan Kovil, and owing to its sacred tank, the place itself is called Thiruvellakulam.

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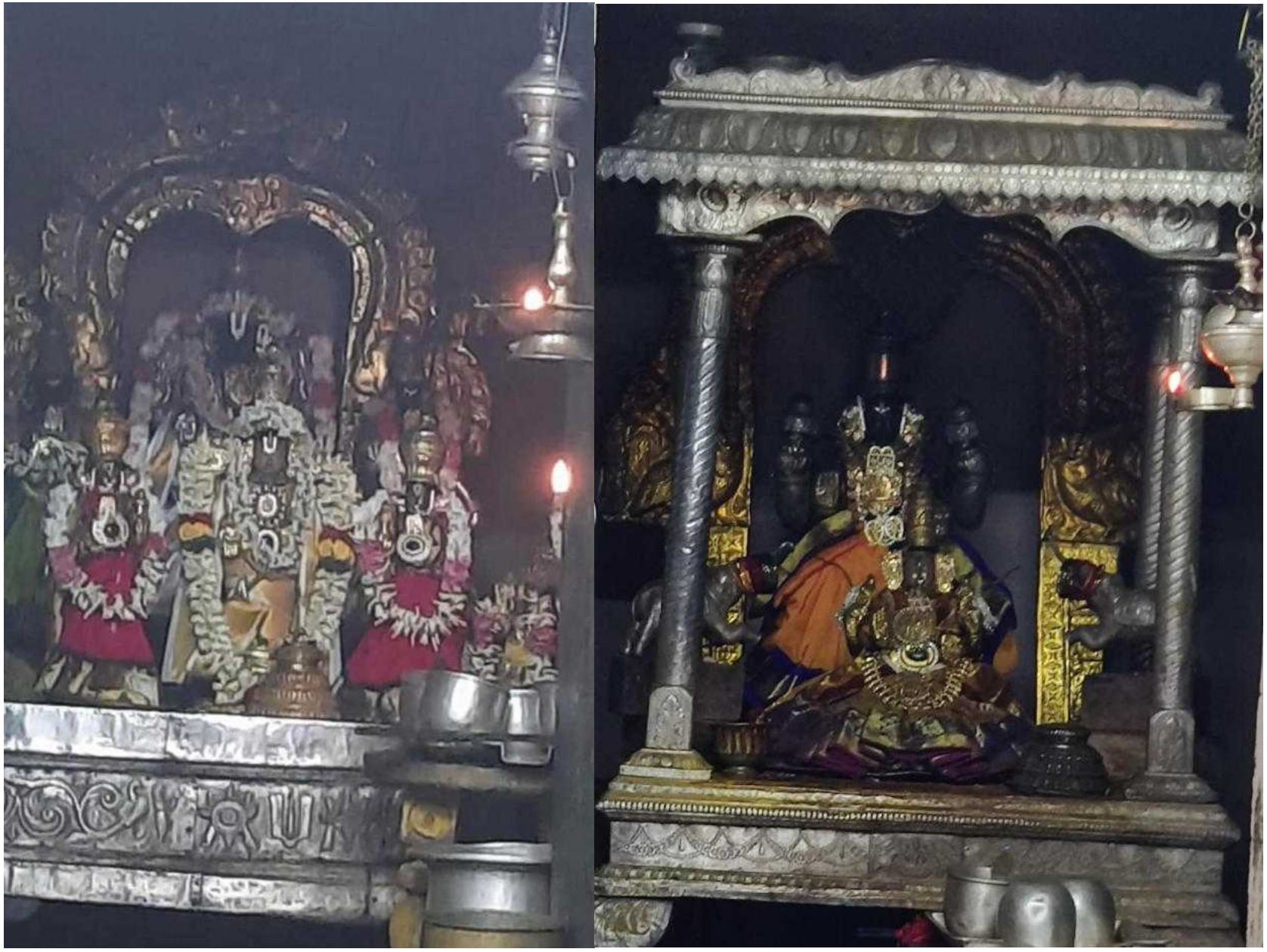
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal (Kannan, Narayanan, Annan Perumal)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Padmavathi (Alarmel Mangai, Poovar Thirumagal)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Srinivasa Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Thiruvellakulam (Swetha Pushkarani) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Thathvathyoodhaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Swetharaja, Lord Shiva, Kumudhavalli Nachiyar and Tirumangai Azhwar |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |



Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal and Goddess Padmavathi – Thiruvellakulam (Annan Kovil)

# 39 Thiruparthanpalli

**Sthalapuranam:**

The eleven temples of Thirunangur are bound together by a single legend. After the death of his consort Uma during Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva, overcome with fury, began to dance at this place. Each time a lock of his hair touched the ground, eleven fierce forms of Shiva appeared. The celestial beings, fearing the destruction of creation itself if the dance continued, sought the help of Vishnu. Responding to their prayers, Vishnu appeared, pacified Shiva, and at Shiva's request, manifested in eleven different forms. These are believed to correspond to the eleven temples at Thirunangur, where great sages such as Agastya, Bharadvaja, Gautama, and Varuna are said to have performed penance. Ekadasa Rudra, a form of Shiva, is also believed to have worshipped Vishnu here. The Padma Purana recounts a special legend of Thiruparthanpalli. Arjuna (Partha), the Pandava prince, once came to this place during his pilgrimage. Thirsty, he approached sage Agastya for water, but there was none available. Realising this was the divine play of Krishna, Arjuna's own Lord, Agastya instructed him to pray to Krishna. Pleased by Arjuna's devotion, Krishna gifted him a sword. With it, Arjuna struck the earth, and water gushed forth, creating the temple tank known as Katka Pushkarani. To this day, Arjuna is depicted in the temple holding a sword, commemorating this event. It is also believed that Krishna appeared here as Parthasarathy, enlightening Arjuna with true knowledge of his divine nature. Since this sacred instruction was imparted here, the temple came to be known as Parthanpalli — the school of Arjuna. Local tradition further holds that this is the very place where the deeper meaning of the celebrated Charma shloka ("Sarva Dharman…") was revealed. Another legend tells that Varuna, the Rain God, once carried away the wife of Brihaspati, the guru of the gods, and incurred the terrible sin of Brahmahathi. Seeking relief, he prayed at this shrine and was absolved.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Thamaraiyaal Kelvan Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Thamarai Nayagi (Shenbagavalli Thayar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Parthasarathi |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Katka Pushkarni and Shanka Saras (Ganga Theertham) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Narayana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Partha (Arjuna), Varuna and Lord Shiva |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Thamaraiyaal Kelvan Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. |

Lord Sri Thamaraiyaal Kelvan Perumal and Goddess Thamarai Nayagi – Thiruparthanpalli

# 40 Thiruchitrakoodam (Chidambaram)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Another legend tells of a demoness named Dhilli, who prayed to Vishnu to transform into a sacred forest so that he might dwell there. Granted her wish, she became the tillai groves, and the land itself was named Thillai Nagar after her. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati once performed a grand cosmic dance in Kailasa. At the conclusion, they sought to know who excelled. When Brahma could not decide, they turned to Vishnu, who asked that a divine stage be built by the celestial architect Vishwakarma. The contest began with both Shiva and Parvati dazzling in their movements, matching each other's steps. Finally, Shiva lifted his right leg above his head, a feat Parvati could not replicate. Declared the victor by Vishnu, Shiva remained here as Nataraja, the Lord of Dance, and requested Vishnu to stay alongside him. Thus, Govindaraja Perumal also took his abode here in reclining form, making this a land sought by devotees for salvation. In another tradition, Adisesha, the divine serpent of Vishnu, longed to witness Shiva's dance. With Vishnu's blessing, he joined sage Vyagrapada, had the darshan of Nataraja, and also received Vishnu's grace here before returning to the milky ocean. The sanctity of the place is further heightened by the story of Kaveran, the king of Kalinga, whose daughter Lopamudra married sage Agastya and later took the form of the sacred Cauvery River. When Kaveran and his queen sought the path of liberation, Lopamudra directed them to Thillai Nagar to worship Vishnu. Their penance was answered, and the Lord appeared with Sridevi and Bhoodevi, granting them salvation. Even Brahma is uniquely enshrined here in a standing posture, unlike in other temples where he is seen seated on Vishnu's navel, said to be in reverence to Vishnu's role as judge in the great dance contest. Historically, the Govindaraja shrine has witnessed turbulence. During the 12th century, Kulothunga Chola II, a Shaiva king, uprooted the deity to assert Shaivite supremacy and suppress Vaishnavism. Saint Ramanuja, who had strong ties with the temple, is believed to have taken the utsava murti (festival deity) to Tirupati for safekeeping. Centuries later, in the 16th century, King Krishnappa Nayak reinstated Govindaraja's deity at Chidambaram despite resistance from Shaiva followers. Since then, the shrine has stood within the great Chidambaram complex.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Govindaraja Perumal**<br>*(Bhoga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Pundareekavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Devathidevan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Pundareeka Theertham, Amudha Koobam, Thirupaarkadal, Sesha Theertham, Garuda Theertham, Cauvery Theertham, Swedha Nadhi Theertham, Iyamabaagachedhana Theertham, Indra Theertham, Agni Theertham, Nirjaraa Theertham and Sami Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Satvika Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Panini, Sage Patanjali, Sage Vyasarpada, Kaveran and his queen, Demigods, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, Sage Kanva and 3000 Dikshitars |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Govindaraja Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in Twenty one (21) hymn and Kulasekhara Alvar in Eleven (11) hymn.
- One of only two Divya Desams located inside Shiva temples, the other being Nilathingal Thundam Perumal temple.

Lord Sri Govindaraja Perumal and Goddess Pundareekavalli – Thiruchitrakoodam

# 41 Thiruvanthipuram

**Sthalapuranam:**

Long ago, during the Chola period, there was some religious intolerance. A Chola king once thought of demolishing the Hayagreeva shrine here. To remove such thoughts from his heart, Lord Vishnu transformed himself into Lord Shiva, with three eyes and matted hair, and gave him darshan. The Lord explained that all gods are one and that there should be no difference between Shaivism and Vaishnavism. There is also a legend about Goddess Lakshmi once becoming upset with Vishnu when he teased her, and in anger she cursed that his head would one day be cut off. Around the same time, a demon named Hayagreeva, with the head of a horse, performed penance for a thousand years and received a boon that only someone of equal power and form could kill him. With this boon, he began troubling sages, devas, and all living beings. To end his terror, Brahma replaced Vishnu's head with that of a horse, and in this form the Lord destroyed the demon. After the victory, Vishnu, along with Adi Lakshmi, appeared on this hill, blessing the world with health and prosperity. Hayagreeva of this temple is also believed to have taught knowledge directly to Goddess Saraswati. The temple is mentioned in the Brahmanda Purana, Naradiya Purana, and Skanda Purana. These scriptures tell how a group of sages went first to the Ocean of Milk and then to Vaikuntha, but could not see Vishnu there. They were told that he could be seen only in a place near the seashore, north of Kumbakonam, south of Tirupati, and west of Kanchipuram. When they reached this spot, they found sage Markandeya and his daughter Bhudevi in penance, and there Vishnu appeared before them in all his splendor with his discus, conch, and mace. The temple is also closely connected with Vedanta Desika, the great Vaishnava acharya of the Vadakalai tradition. He lived here for many years, composed several works in Sanskrit and Tamil, and praised the glory of Devanayaka Perumal in his hymns. Another story tells how Vishnu once asked Garuda to bring water from the sacred lake called Vraja Tirtha in the netherworld. When Garuda brought it secretly, the presiding sage cursed the water to become impure. To save the situation, Adisesha struck the earth with his tail and created a new well, and the water from this well is still used daily in the temple. Garuda, feeling guilty, was consoled by Vishnu, who promised to create a river in his name, now known as the Kedilam River.

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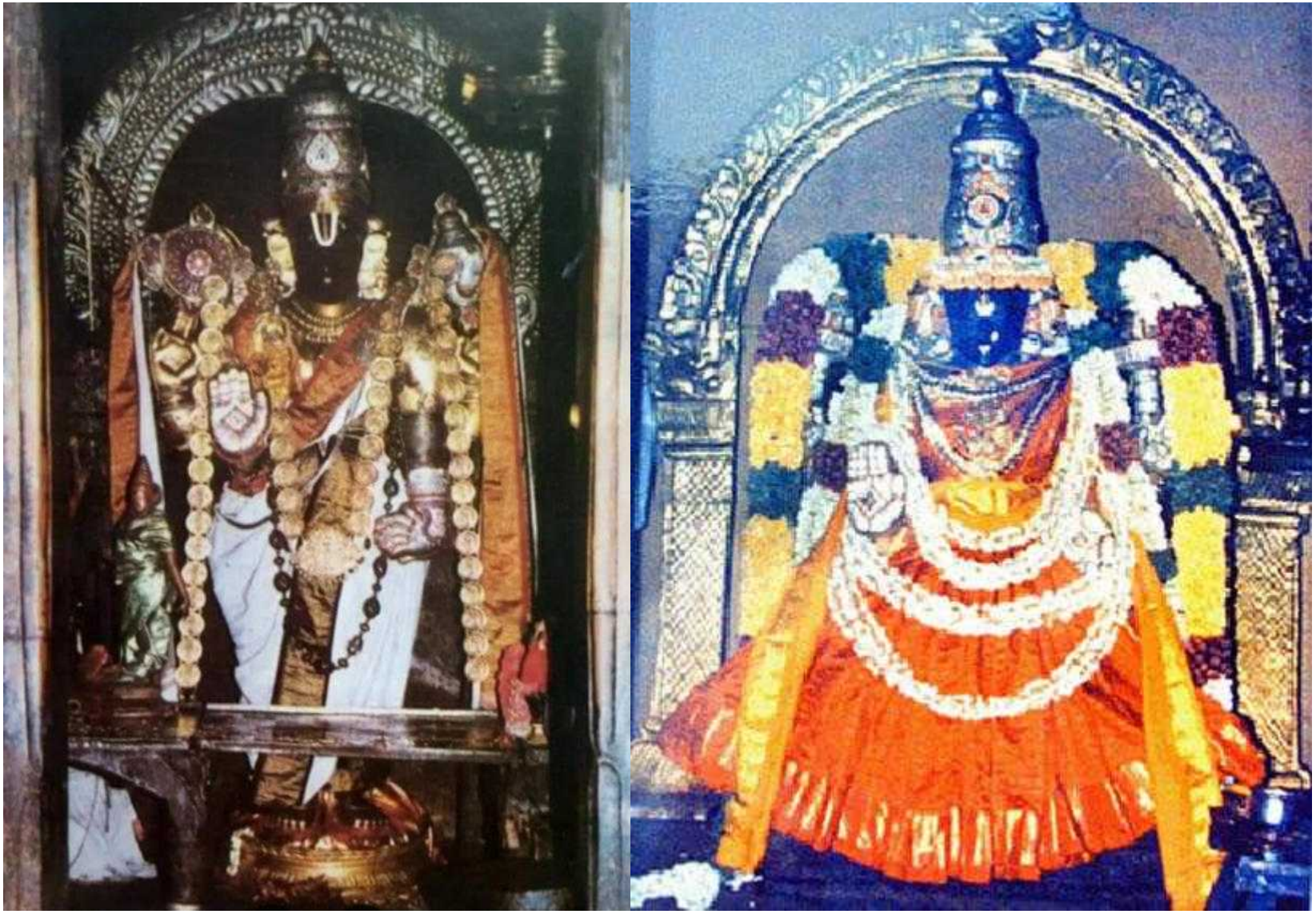
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Devanayaka Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Hemambujavalli (Vaikunda Nayaki, Bhargavi)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Devanathan, Moovaragiya Oruvan (Devan), Devanarayana, Divishannathan, Vibhuthanathan, Dasasathyan, Adiyavarukku Meyyan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kedilam River (Garuda Nadhi), Sesha Theertham (Bhoo Theertham) and Chandra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Chandra Vimanam and Suddhasattva Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Markandeya, Garuda, Adisesha, Vedanta Desika, Chandra and Chola king |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Devanayaka Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymn.
- This temple is one of the Navaratna temples and is known as Nadha Ratnam.
- The temple is the only historical temple in South India to have a shrine of Hayagriva.



Lord Sri Devanayaka Perumal and Goddess Hemambujavalli – Thiruvanthipuram

# 42 Thirukkovilur

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to the Bhagavata Purana, King Mahabali, the grandson of Prahlada, gained control over the heavens, and to restore Indra's authority, Vishnu descended as Vamana, the dwarf Brahmin. When Mahabali agreed to grant him three paces of land, Vamana revealed his vast Trivikrama form, covering heaven and earth in two strides. With no space left, Mahabali offered his head for the third step, and Vishnu blessed him with immortality and sovereignty over the netherworld. The temple at Thirukovilur is also linked to sage Mrikandu and his wife Mithravathi, who longed to witness the Vamana avatara. Vishnu appeared at their hermitage as a hungry Brahmin, and when Mithravathi prayed in distress, their empty vessels were miraculously filled with food. The Lord then revealed himself as Vamana–Trivikrama.

Another celebrated event here is the meeting of the three earliest Alvars—Poigai, Bhoothath, and Pey. On a stormy night, all three found shelter in a small space, where they sensed a fourth presence. A flash of lightning revealed Vishnu among them. Overwhelmed, Poigai Alvar composed hymns comparing the earth to a great lamp filled with ghee, the ocean as its oil, and the Sun as its eternal flame, so that the Lord could be seen without interruption. Thus, Thirukovilur, on the banks of the Thenpennai river, became one of the 108 Divya Desams, sacred as the site of Vamana's Trivikrama form and the divine vision granted to the first Alvars. The presiding deity, Ulagalantha Perumal, is depicted with one leg raised to complete his cosmic stride, and the temple's towering rajagopuram is among the tallest in South India.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture*- with one leg raised - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Pushpavalli (Poongoval Nachiyar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Aayan, Aayanar, Kovalan (Gopalan) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Pennai River, Krishna Theertham, Chakra Theertham, and Sukra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Sura (Srikara) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Mrikandu and his wife Mithravathi, Bali Maharaj, Lord Brahma, Indra, Kukshi, Sounaka, Sage Kashyapa, Kaalvar, Kuchadvajan, and Mudalazhwars |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in eighteen (18) hymn, Poigai Azhwar in two hymn and Boodhatazhwar in one hymn.<br>• The temple is one of the Panchakanna (Krishnaranya) Kshetrams, the five holy temples associated with Lord Krishna. |

Lord Sri Trivikrama Perumal, Goddess Pushpavalli and Lord Vamana – Thirukkoyilur

# 43 Thirukkachi (Atthigiri)

**Sthalapuranam:**

In every age, Lord Vishnu has been worshipped by great beings—by Brahma in Krita Yuga, by Gajendra in Treta, by Brihaspati in Dvapara, and by Adisesha in Kali Yuga. Among these, Brahma once longed to behold the Lord in His full splendour with conch, discus, and mace. To fulfil this desire, he performed severe penance. First the Lord revealed Himself as a sacred Pushkarini at Pushkar, then as the forest of Naimisharanya. Yet Brahma yearned for more. A divine voice instructed him to perform a hundred Ashwamedha sacrifices to gain the vision of Sri Varadaraja in Chaturbhuja form. Finding the task impossible, Brahma was comforted by the Lord Himself, who declared that a single Ashwamedha performed at Kanchipuram would equal a thousand elsewhere. Thus, at the holy Sathya Vratha Kshetram, Brahma began the sacrifice. But his consort Saraswati, displeased at being excluded, tried to halt it in many ways. The Lord Himself intervened: He stemmed the flooding river Vegavati by reclining across it at Thiruvekka, subdued demons with eight arms at Ashtabhujam, and dispelled darkness by shining as a flame at Thiru Thanka. At last, He appeared from the sacrificial fire as Sri Varadaraja, granting Brahma the long-desired Chaturbhuja darshan. Since Brahma worshipped Him here, the place came to be known as "Kanchi." Even today, it is believed that Brahma visits Varadaraja on the full moon night of Chitrai, and signs of his invisible worship are witnessed in the sanctum. Over the centuries, the temple has seen many marvels. During invasions, the original wooden idol of Athi Varadar was hidden in the temple tank, to be brought out only once in forty years for public worship. Legends also tell of two disciples of Sage Gautama, cursed into lizards, who were released by Varadaraja's grace. To this day, golden and silver lizards fixed in the temple remind devotees of that episode, and touching them is believed to remove sins and ailments. Its sacred hill, Hasthagiri, recalls the legend of Indra's redemption. The temple also became the centre of deep devotion. The Alvars sang of Varadaraja, and great teachers such as Vedanta Desika and Ramanuja were connected with this shrine. Thirukkachi Nambi, the humble servant who daily fanned the Lord and brought flowers, is remembered for his intimate conversations with Varadaraja, through which even Ramanuja received answers to his spiritual doubts. The Kshetram is known as Attiyuran, Attigiri, Perarulalan Perumal temple, Kanchi Koil, Thirukatchi, or Perumal Koil.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal (Devaraja Swamy, Perarulalan, Devadhirajan, Devaperumal)**
(*Standing posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Perundevi Thayar (Mahadevi)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Vegavadhi River, Ananta Saras, Sesha Theertham, Varaha Theertham, Bramha Theertham, Padma Theertham, and Agnikusala Theerthams.

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

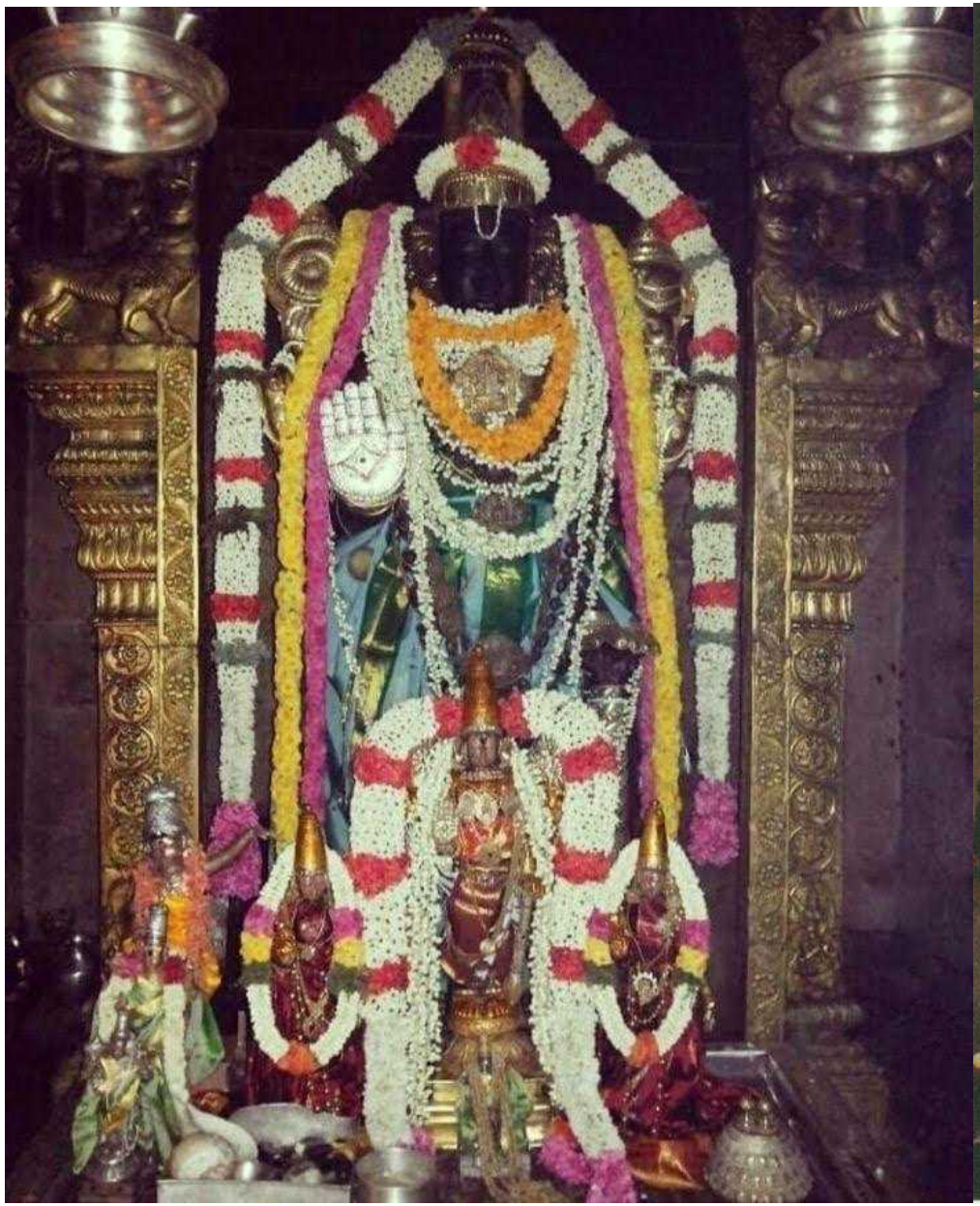
Punyakoti Vimanam for Lord Sri Varadharaja Perumal, Kalyana Koti Vimanam for Goddess Perundevi Thayar and Gugha Vimanam for Lord Sri Narasimha

**Devotees Blessed:**

Lord Brahma, two disciples of Sage Gautama, Sri Ramanujacharya, Thirukkachi Nambi, Adi Sesha, Sage Narada, Sage Bhrigu, and Gajendra

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in four hymn, Pey Azhwar in one hymn and Boodhatazhwar in two hymn.
- Srirangam is simply called "Koil" (temple), and Tirupati is called "Malai" (hill). Among the Divya Desams, the Kanchipuram Varadharaja Perumal Temple is known as "Perumal Koil". The fourth in this series is Melukote, called Thirunarayanapuram.



Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal and Goddess Perundevi Thayar - Thirukkachi (Atthigiri)

# 44 Ashtabujagaram

**Sthalapuranam:**

In the sacred town of Vishnu Kanchi, there stands the celebrated shrine of Sri Aadhikesava Perumal, revered as Ashtabhuja Perumal, the Lord with eight arms. His form is majestic, holding the discus, conch, sword, shield, mace, bow, arrow, and lotus – each weapon a symbol of His protection and grace. Long ago, a divine dispute arose in the celestial realms. Saraswati, the consort of Brahma, and Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, argued about their superiority. Seeking judgment, they approached Indra, the king of the devas. Indra declared Lakshmi to be supreme. Dissatisfied, Saraswati turned to her own husband, Brahma. But Brahma too judged Lakshmi to be superior. Angered and hurt, Saraswati withdrew from Brahma and chose to stay away from him. In sorrow, Brahma undertook a severe penance and performed an Ashvamedha Yajna to seek the grace of Lord Vishnu. But Saraswati, still displeased, could not accept that the yajna was being conducted without her. She tried in many ways to disrupt the sacrifice – even flowing as the mighty river Vegavati to submerge the yajna. Yet, every attempt was thwarted by Lord Vishnu Himself, who stood as the protector of Brahma's penance. Finally, Saraswati sent forth a ferocious serpent to destroy the sacrifice. At that moment, Vishnu revealed Himself in a wondrous form never seen before – Ashtabhuja Perumal, bearing eight divine weapons. With these, He destroyed the serpent and preserved the sanctity of the yajna. To this day, the serpent is remembered in the temple mandapam as Sarabeswara, reminding all of the Lord's victory over every obstruction faced by His devotees. In ancient times, King Indradyumna was reborn as the elephant Gajendra. With deep devotion, he worshipped Lord Vishnu daily, offering lotuses from the temple tank. One day, as he reached into the waters to pluck a flower, a crocodile seized his leg. Helpless, Gajendra cried out from his heart, calling the Lord as "Adhi Moolame!" Instantly, Vishnu appeared upon Garuda, hurled His discus, and struck down the crocodile, granting salvation to Gajendra. The tank of the temple is thus called Gajendra Pushkarani, eternalizing this act of grace. Another tale speaks of a yogi named Mahasandhan, whose penance was so powerful that even Indra grew fearful. To break his tapas, Indra sent celestial maidens, but the yogi remained unmoved. At last, Indra himself came in the form of a majestic elephant. The yogi, momentarily swayed, took the form of an elephant and wandered the forests until his past folly dawned on him. Seeking redemption, he travelled to many Divya Desams and finally arrived at the abode of Ashtabhuja Perumal. With steadfast devotion, he offered the Lord 14,000 flowers each day. One day, while plucking lotuses from the tank, a crocodile caught his leg. In anguish, the yogi-elephant cried out for the Lord. As before, Vishnu appeared, liberated him from the crocodile, and blessed him with salvation.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Ashtabhuja Perumal (Gajendra Varada or Aadhikesava or Chakradhara)**
(*Standing posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Padmasani Thayar (Alarmelmangai)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Gajendra Pushkarni

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Gaganakruthi and Chakrakruthi (Vyomakara) Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Yogi Mahasandhan, Gajendra and Lord Brahma

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ashtabhuja Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in Eleven (11) hymn and Pey Azhwar in one hymn.

Lord Sri Ashtabhuja Perumal and Goddess Padmasani Thayar – Ashtabujagaram

# 45 Thiruthanka (Thoopul)

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | Long ago, a dispute arose between Goddess Saraswati, consort of Lord Brahma, and Goddess Lakshmi over who was superior. Seeking judgment, they first approached Indra, the king of the celestials. Indra declared Lakshmi as superior, but dissatisfied with his verdict, Saraswati went to her husband, Brahma. Even Brahma chose Lakshmi, which greatly displeased Saraswati. Hurt by his decision, she distanced herself from him. In her absence, Brahma undertook a severe penance, worshipping Lord Vishnu, and performed an Ashvamedha Yagna. Traditionally such a sacrifice was conducted with the consort, but Brahma proceeded with Savitri. Angered by this, Saraswati tried to obstruct the Yajna. She sent darkness and disturbances, but Vishnu intervened, manifesting as a stream of divine light that dispelled the darkness. Because He appeared like the radiance of a lamp to protect Brahma's sacrifice, He came to be known as Vilakkoli Perumal in Tamil and Deepa Prakasa Perumal in Sanskrit. In another version, Saraswati, influenced by the Asuras who were offended at being ignored in the Yajna, created a fierce being, Maya Nalan, who appeared as a consuming fire to destroy the sacrifice. Once again, Lord Vishnu came to Brahma's aid, holding the blazing fire in His palm, transforming it into a lamp of divine brilliance. Seeing this, Saraswati realized her error and was reconciled with Brahma. It is believed that to soothe the burning hand of Vishnu, Saraswati herself appeared at the site as the cool waters of a sacred spring, now revered as Saraswati Theertham. The temple that commemorates this divine episode stands at Tirutanka (Thoopul) in Kanchipuram. Vedanta Desika (1268–1369 CE), one of the greatest teachers of the Sri Vaishnava tradition, was an ardent devotee of Deepa Prakasa and his birthplace this is. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Deepa Prakasa Perumal (Vilakkoli or Divya Prakasa)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Maragathavalli Thayar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Saraswati Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Srikara Vimana |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Vedanta Desikar, Lord Brahma and Goddess Saraswati |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Deepa Prakasa Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in two hymn. |

Lord Sri Deepaprakasa Perumal and Goddess Maragadhavalli Thayar - Thiruthanka

# 46 Thiruvelukkai

**Sthalapuranam:**

Velukkai, also known as Azhagiya Singar Perumal Temple, derives its name from Vel (desire) and irukkai (place of stay), signifying the place where Lord Vishnu desired to reside. Over time, Velirukkai became Velukkai. According to legend, once a dispute arose between Goddess Saraswati, consort of Brahma, and Goddess Lakshmi over who was superior. To resolve it, they approached Indra, king of the celestials, who declared Lakshmi to be supreme. Dissatisfied, Saraswati turned to Brahma, but he too judged Lakshmi superior. Upset by this, Saraswati withdrew from Brahma, while Brahma, in her absence, undertook severe penance, praying to Lord Vishnu and performing an Ashvamedha Yajna. Angered that the yajna—normally performed with the consort—was carried out without her, Saraswati tried repeatedly to obstruct it. She sent various demons to disrupt the sacrifice, but each time Lord Vishnu intervened and destroyed them. Finally, she created a formidable demon named Kapalika to annihilate the yajna. To protect Brahma and the sanctity of the sacrifice, Lord Vishnu manifested in the fierce form of Narahari—Lord Narasimha—and slew the demon. It is also believed that Sage Bhrigu once worshipped Lord Vishnu at this place.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Azhagiya Singa Perumal (Mukunda Nayaka or Narasimha)**
(*Sitting yogic posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Amritavalli Thayar (Vellukkai Valli)**

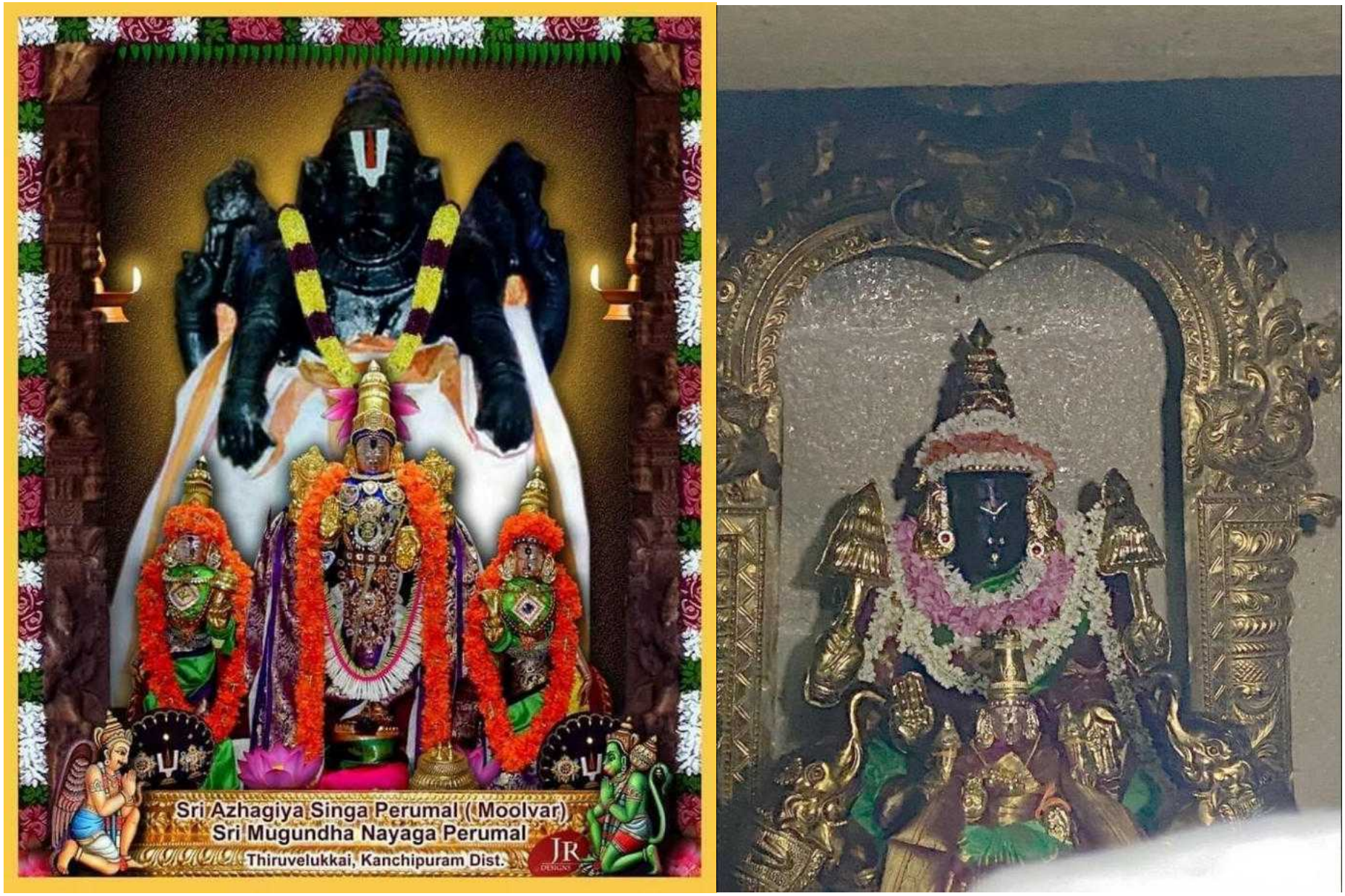
**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Kanaga Saras or Hema Saras Pushkarani

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Kanaka Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Bhirgu Rishi, Lord Brahma and Goddess Saraswati

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Azhagiya Singa Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn and Pey Azhwar in three hymn.
- A unique feature here is the deity of Garuda in Narasimha's shrine, tilting his head slightly to the side, as though unable to withstand the Lord's fiery energy.




Lord Sri Azhagiya Singa Perumal and Goddess Amritavalli Thayar – Thiruvelukkai

# 47 Thiruneeragam

**Sthalapuranam:**

The legend of this Divya Desam emphasizes the greatness of neer—water—the essential element and elixir of all life on earth. To teach this truth, Lord Narayana manifests here as Jagadeeshwara Perumal, also known as Thiru Neeragathan. Just as water flows eagerly to the smallest opening, the Lord too rushes into the hearts of His devotees, filling their souls with bhakti. Thiru Neeragam is located within the precincts of the great Ulagalantha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram. This sacred temple uniquely enshrines three Divya Desams—Thiruneeragam, Thirukkaragam, and Thirukkaarvanam—all celebrated together by Thirumangai Azhwar in a single paasuram. In the second prakaram of Ulagalantha Perumal Temple, behind the sixteen-pillared mandapam, lies the small shrine of Thiruneeragam. Here, the Lord blesses devotees as Neeragathan – Jagadeesha Perumal, enshrined under the Jagadeeshwara Vimanam, standing and facing east. Though modest in size, this shrine holds profound significance. It is here that Sage Markandeya, the father-in-law of Oppiliappan, performed penance on the banks of the Bhadra River, yearning to see the Lord in the divine form of Aalilai Krishna—the child resting on a banyan leaf at the time of cosmic dissolution. Pleased by his devotion, Lord Vishnu recreated the scene of pralaya, revealing Himself as the enchanting Aalilai Krishna floating upon the floodwaters, thus granting the sage His vision.

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|---|---|
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Jagadeesha Perumal (Neeragathaan)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Nilamangaivalli Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Akrura Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Jagadeeshwara Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Markandeya and Thirumangai Azhwar |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Jagadeesha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram is remarkable for housing four Divya Desams within its premises. Among them are Thiruneeragam, Thirukkaragam, and Thirukkaarvanam, making it one of the rare temples where multiple Divya Desams are enshrined together.

Lord Sri Jagadeesha Perumal and Goddess Nilamangaivalli Nachiyar – Thiruneeragam

# 48 Thiruppadagam

**Sthalapuranam:**

The temple legend traces back to the episode when Krishna went to Hastinapura as the envoy (dhootar) of the Pandavas, urging the Kauravas to embrace peace. Duryodhana, however, schemed to capture Him. He set up a pit covered with bamboo, atop which he arranged a jeweled throne for Krishna to sit on. Hidden wrestlers waited below to overpower Him. But Krishna, the Supreme Lord, revealed His cosmic Vishwaroopa in the Kaurava court, dazzling the assembly. Even the blind king Dhritarashtra, blessed by Krishna's grace, was granted vision for a moment to behold this wondrous form. Overwhelmed, he prayed to be blind again, unwilling to see anything after such a vision. Generations later, Janamejaya, the great-grandson of the Pandavas, performed penance at this site, longing to witness the same divine manifestation. Pleased, Krishna once again revealed His cosmic form, this time seated, as Pandavadhootha Perumal. The awe-inspiring 25-foot tall deity enshrined here in a seated posture is believed to be that very form granted to Janamejaya. Nowhere else in India does such a colossal stucco deity of Perumal exist in a seated posture. The deity is unique: He is shown with just two arms, as Krishna revealed Himself in human form. Seated in Ardha Padmasana, His right palm is raised in Abhaya Mudra (assurance of protection), while the left displays Varada Mudra (granting of boons). Another legend connects Rohini, daughter of Daksha, who worshipped Krishna here and received Chandra, the moon god, as her husband. The temple also has deep ties with Sri Ramanujacharya. His disciple, Yagna Murthi—a celebrated scholar initially proud of his victories in debate—was humbled by Ramanuja here and transformed into a devoted follower, later known as Arulala Perumal Emberumaanar. His image is enshrined uniquely in this temple. Thirupadagam – Pandavadhootha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram is a unique shrine where Bhagavan Sri Krishna is worshipped in His majestic Viswaroopa form, as He appeared in the Mahabharata. Thirupadagam, literally meaning "the great residence," symbolizes the Lord's willingness to manifest in grand, awe-inspiring forms for the protection of dharma and the reassurance of His devotees.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Pandavadhootha Perumal**
(*Sitting posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Rukmini** and **Goddess Sathyabhama**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Matsya Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Pathra Vimanam, Vedakoti (Devakoti), Bhadra Vimana

**Devotees Blessed:**

Rohini, Sage Harita and King Janamejaya

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (divine praises) for Sri Pandavadhootha Perumal has been rendered by the Azhwars—Tirumangai Alvar in ten hymns, Bhudhat Alvar in one hymn, Thirumalisai Alvar in two hymns, and Pey Alvar in one hymn.
- One of the tallest Moolavars among Divyadesams, standing over 25 feet.

Lord Sri Pandavadootha Perumal and Goddess Rukmini - Thiruppadagam

# 49 Thirunilathingal Thundam

**Sthalapuranam:**

The Sthala Puranam also links this temple with the penance of Goddess Parvati beneath the ancient mango tree on the banks of the Vegavathi River. To test her devotion, Lord Shiva set the tree ablaze. Parvati prayed to her divine master and brother, Lord Vishnu, for protection. The Lord appeared in the form of Vamana, bearing the conch and discus, and took the crescent moon from Shiva's crown. By reflecting its cool rays, He extinguished the fire, restoring the tree and shielding Parvati. Unconvinced, Shiva tested her once more by releasing the torrential waters of the Ganga to disrupt her austerities. Parvati first appealed to Ganga, reminding her of their sisterly bond, but when the river persisted, she fashioned a Shiva Linga from sand and embraced it with devotion. Pleased by her steadfastness, Shiva manifested from the Linga and united with her. From then on, He came to be worshipped as Ekambareswarar, the Lord of the Mango Tree, while Vishnu came to be revered as Nilathingal Thundam Perumal. During this event, Shiva appeared with the crescent moon adorning His matted locks, and its cool rays fell upon Vishnu, dispelling the darkness and restoring His resplendent blue radiance, more brilliant than ever. From this episode, the Lord earned the name Nilathunda (Moon-blessed) Perumal. His shrine is uniquely situated in the Isanya (northeastern) corner of the great Ekambareswarar Temple.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Chandrasooda Perumal (Nilaththingal Thundathaan)**
(*Standing posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Chandrasoodavalli (Nilaththingal Thunda Thaayar, Ner Oruvar Illavalli Nachiyar)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Chandra Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

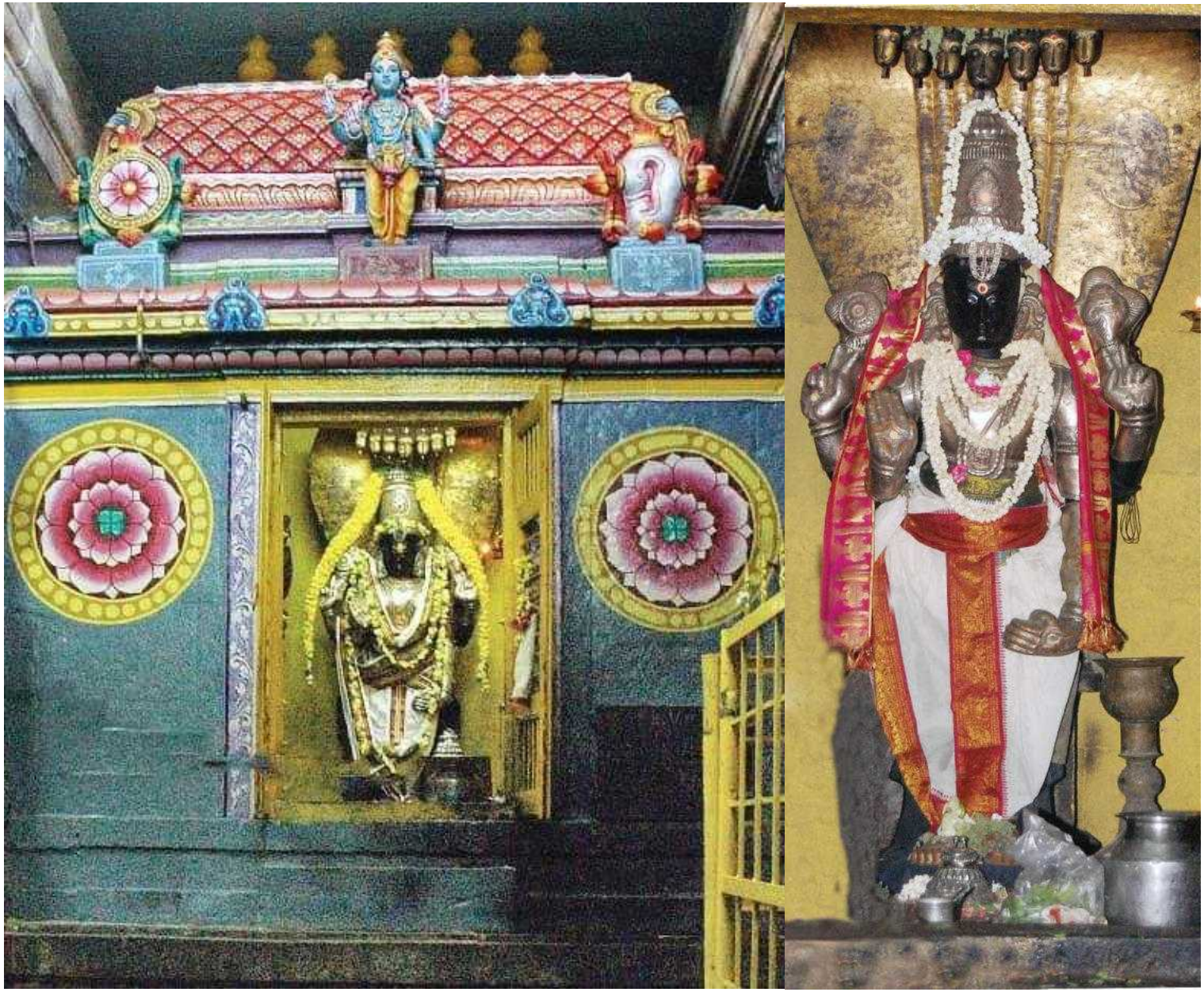
Purusha Suktha Vimanam (Soorya Vimanam)

**Devotees Blessed:**

Goddess Parvati, Lord Shiva and Chandra

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Chandrasooda Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- The shrine of Nilathingal Thundam is a temple within a temple, a Divya Desam situated inside a great Shaiva kshetra. Lord has no consort enshrined beside Him. However, Mahalakshmi believed to be inseparably present within Him. Pujas here follow Saivite tradition and are performed by Shivacharyas, not Vaishnava priests.



Lord Sri Chandrasooda Perumal and Goddess Chandrasoodavalli - Thirunilathingal Thundam

# 50 Thiruooragam

**Sthalapuranam:**

Long ago, the good and generous king Mahabali became very powerful and started to rule over the heavens, earth, and netherworld. Though kind, pride entered his heart. To humble him and restore balance, Lord Vishnu came down as a small Brahmin boy named Vamana. Vamana went to Mahabali and asked for just three steps of land. The king agreed, but in that moment Vamana revealed His true form as the gigantic Trivikrama. With one step, He covered the heavens; with the second, He covered the earth. Having no place left for the third step, Mahabali bowed down and offered his own head. The Lord placed His foot on the king, sending him to the netherworld, but also blessed him and made him ruler there. Mahabali wished to see once more the Lord who measured the worlds. Out of compassion, Lord Vishnu appeared before him at Kanchipuram as Ulagalantha Perumal—the Lord who measured the universe. The deity here is huge, over 35 feet tall, with one leg raised high to show His cosmic stride. Since Mahabali could not behold this vast form fully, the Lord also appeared again in a gentler form as Adisesha, the serpent, at a smaller shrine called Tiru Ooragam inside the same temple. This temple is very special because it houses four Divya Desams (holy shrines) in one place—Thirukkaarvaanam, Thirukkaarakam, Thiruneeragam, and Tiru Ooragam. The goddess here is called Amudhavalli Thayar, and the sacred tank is Naga (Sesha) Tirtham.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Ulagalantha Perumal (Trivikrama)** (*Standing posture – Raising one leg* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Amudhavalli (Amruthavalli) Thayar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Lord Perragatthan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Naga Theertham (Sesha Theertham) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Sara Srikara Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Mahabali |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ulagalantha Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in four hymn and Thirumalisai Alvar in two hymn.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (Tiru Ooragam) in Kanchipuram is remarkable for housing four Divya Desams within its premises. Among them are Thiruneeragam, Thirukkaragam, and Thirukkaarvanam, making it one of the rare temples where multiple Divya Desams are enshrined together.

Lord Sri Trivikrama (Ulagalantha) Perumal and Goddess Amudhavalli (Amruthavalli) – Thiruooragam

# 51 Thiruvekka

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to tradition, a dispute once arose between Goddess Saraswati and Goddess Lakshmi over their superiority. Both sought judgment from Indra and later from Brahma, but each time Lakshmi was declared superior. Angered and estranged from her husband, Saraswati refused to join Brahma in his Ashvamedha Yajna. To protect the sacrifice from her wrath, Lord Vishnu intervened. When Saraswati took the form of the fierce Vegavathi River to disrupt the ritual, Vishnu lay across the river on Adisesha, halting her flow. This divine act earned Him the name Vegasetu, which over time became Vekka, giving the temple its sacred title Thiruvekka. The temple is also closely linked with the Alvars, the poet-saints of Vaishnavism. Poigai Alvar, one of the first three Alvars known as the Muthalazhwargal, is believed to have been born in a lotus in the temple's sacred tank, Poigai Pushkarani. He is considered the incarnation of Lord Vishnu's conch. Another great saint, Thirumalisai Alvar, whose life was filled with divine grace, is associated with this shrine. Once, by his prayers, an old lady who served him regained her youth. The Pallava king, enchanted by her, married her. As he aged while she remained young, he commanded Thirumalisai's disciple Kanikkannan to sing in his praise to regain youth. When Kanikkannan refused, the king banished him. In loyalty, Thirumalisai Alvar also chose exile, praying to the Lord to accompany them. Obeying His devotee's wish, Lord Vishnu left Kanchipuram with them. Darkness engulfed the city until the king repented and begged their return. The Lord, hurrying back to His abode, is said to have reclined in the unusual reverse sleeping posture (Maaru Sayanam) seen only at this temple. Because He fulfilled His devotee's request, He is revered as Yathothkari Perumal – "the Lord who does as requested."

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Yathottakari (Sonnavanam Seidha or Vegasetu) Perumal**
*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing West)*

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Komalavalli Nachiyar**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Poigai Pushkarni

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

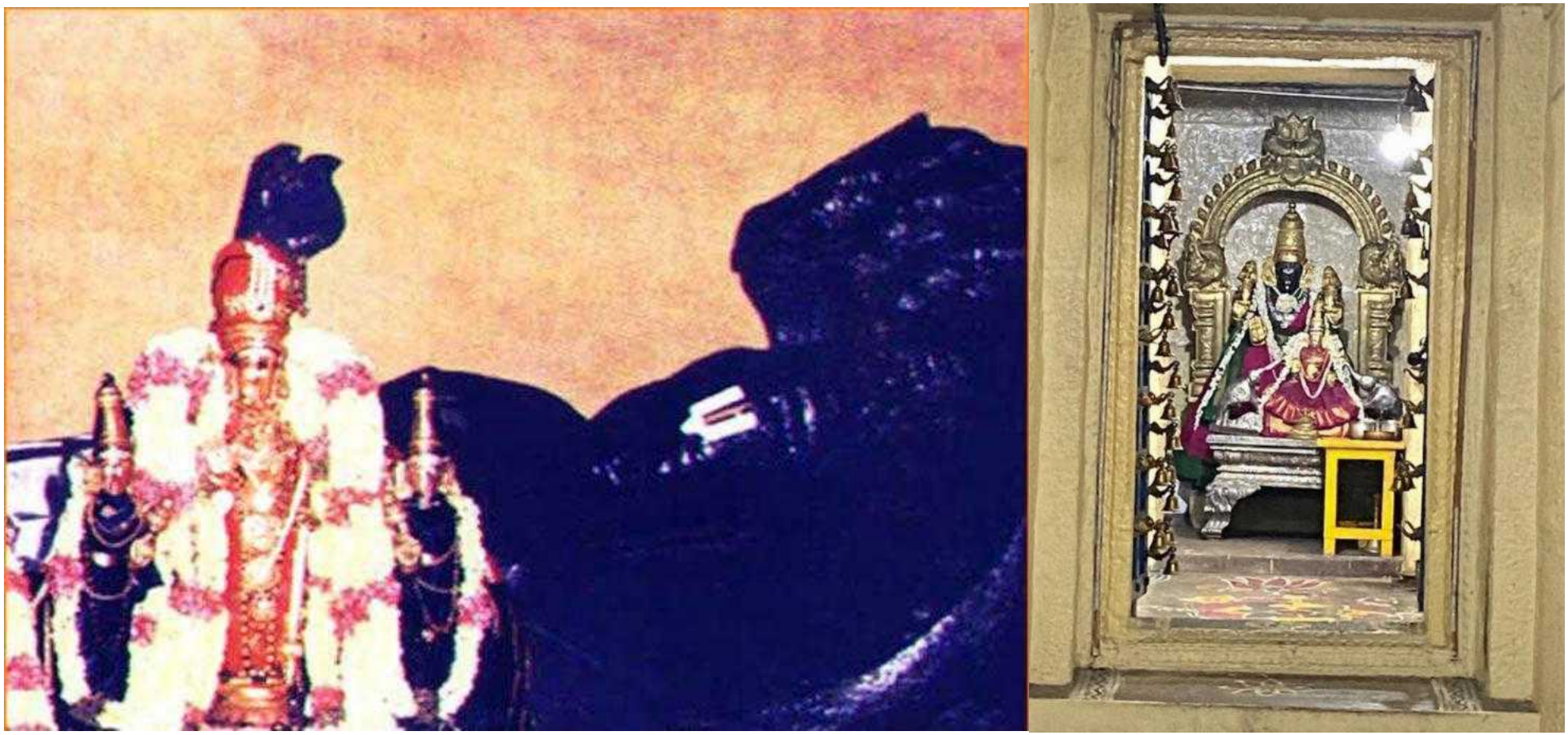
Vedasara Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Poigai Alvar, Bhoodhath Alvar, Thirumalisai Alvar, Lord Brahma, Goddess Saraswati and Kanikkannan

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Yathottakari Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in six hymn, Poigai Alvar in one hymn, Pey Alvar in four hymn, Nammalvar in one hymn and Thirumalisai Alvar in three hymn.
- Thiruvekka is the only Divya Desam where the Lord reclines from right to left (Maaru Sayanam), resting His head on His left hand. In all other shrines, He reclines from left to right, with His head on His right hand.



Lord Sri Yathottakari (Sonnavanam Seidha) Perumal and Goddess Komalavalli – Thiruvekka

# 52 Thirukkaragam

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiru Kaaragam, where Vishnu reveals Himself as Karunakara Perumal—the embodiment of divine compassion. According to legend, sage Garga performed penance here and was blessed with divine knowledge, giving the place its name "Garagaham," later becoming "Kaaragam." Here the Lord manifests as the clouds (Kaar) that shower rain selflessly upon the earth, enriching all without expectation. Just as the clouds demand no return, Karunakara Perumal accepts no offering but pure devotion from His bhaktas. For this reason, He is called Karunakara—the One who bestows grace and courtesy. Thiru Ooragam in Kanchipuram, where the Lord is worshipped as Trivikrama (Ulagalantha Perumal). Within the same sacred complex lies Thiru Kaaragam Divya Desam.

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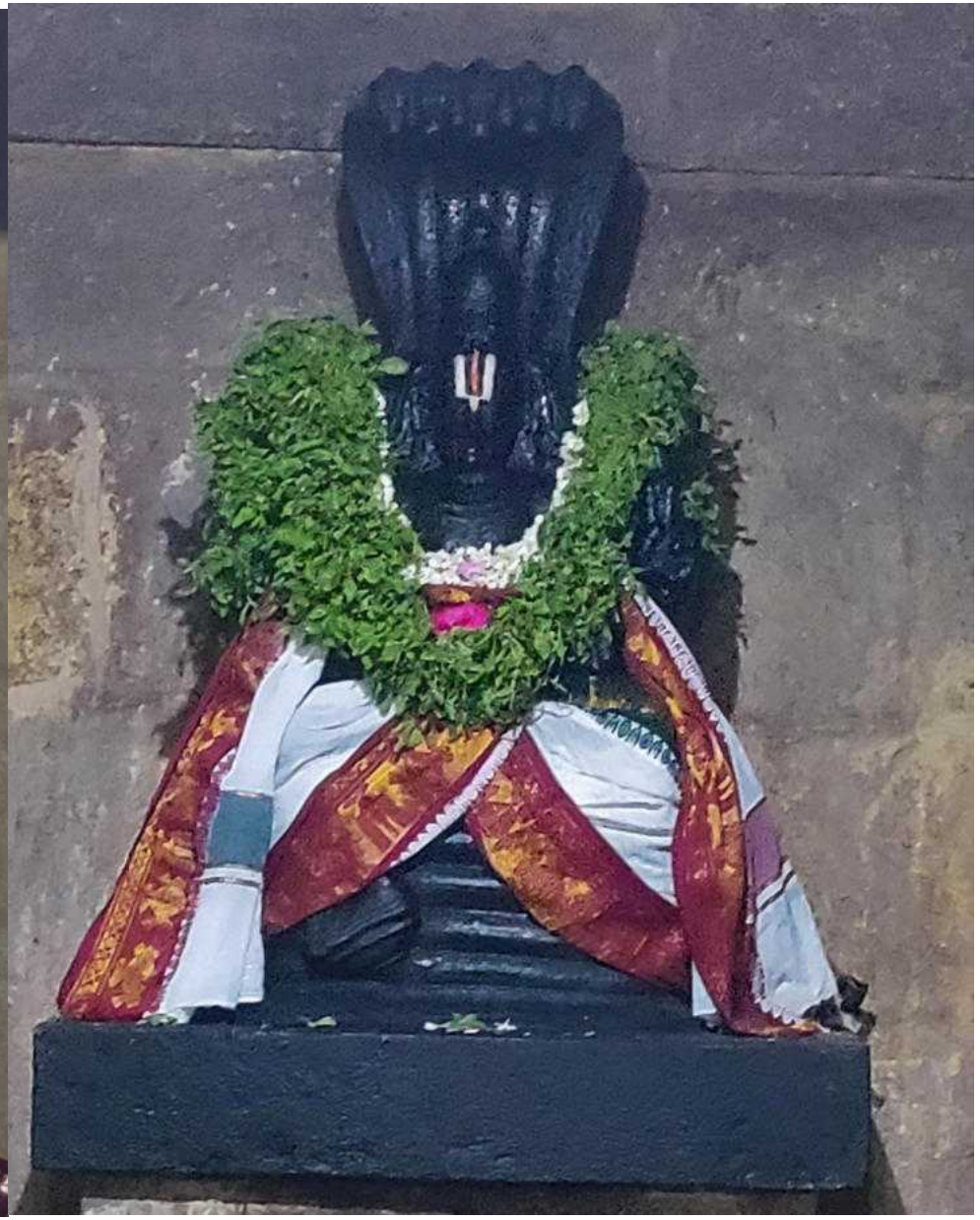
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Karunakara Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing South) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Padmamani Thayar (Ramamani Nachiyar)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Akraya Theertham (Ambarisha Saras) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Vamana Vimanam, Ramya Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Garga (Sage Megha Niketana) |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Karunakara Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (Tiru Ooragam) in Kanchipuram is remarkable for housing four Divya Desams within its premises. Among them are Thiruneeragam, Thirukkaragam, and Thirukkaarvanam, making it one of the rare temples where multiple Divya Desams are enshrined together.



Lord Sri Karunagara Perumal and Goddess Padmamani – Thirukkaragam

# 53 Thirukkarvaanam

**Sthalapuranam:**

At Thirukkaarvaanam Divya Desam, Lord Vishnu is worshipped as Thirukkaarvaanar. The word Kaar means clouds, while Neer means water. Just as the world cannot survive without water, it cannot survive without the Lord. Here, the Lord reveals that the clouds that pour life-giving rain are none other than His own reflection, sustaining creation without expectation. As the dark, rain-bearing clouds nourish the earth, so too does Sriman Narayana nurture all beings through His grace. For this reason, He is adored as Thirukkaar Vaanakkalvar or Neelamegha Perumal, the divine cloud who blesses the world with sustenance. In this shrine, the Lord appears as Sri Kalvar. Tradition holds that He gave darshan to Goddess Parvati (Gowri Devi) at this very place. Thirumangai Alvar, in his Pasurams, praises this Divya Desam, mentioning Thirukkaarvaanam as one among the sacred shrines of Kanchipuram. Within the Ulagalantha Perumal Temple complex, Thirukkaarvaanam is represented by the deity of Kalvar, enshrined in a prakaram. It is believed that sage Kaaraha Maharishi also attained divine powers here through penance, giving another name to the place—Kaarvanam.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Neelamegha (Kalvar or Kaarvaanar) Perumal**
(*Standing posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Kamalavalli (Thamaraiyal)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Gowri Thadakam (Dharaadhara Theertham)

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Pushkala Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Kaaraha, Gowri (Parvati)

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Neelamega Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (Tiru Ooragam) in Kanchipuram is remarkable for housing four Divya Desams within its premises. Among them are Thiruneeragam, Thirukkaragam, and Thirukkaarvanam, making it one of the rare temples where multiple Divya Desams are enshrined together.

Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal and Goddess Kamalavalli – Thirukkarvaanam

# 54 Thirukkalvanur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Once, in a divine play, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati had a quarrel. In a moment of sternness, Shiva cursed Her. Repenting soon after, and moved by Her steadfast devotion, He instructed Her to perform severe penance by standing on one leg. Pleased with Her tapas, Shiva was reconciled with Her. At this time, when Goddess Kamakshi (none other than Parvati Herself) and Goddess Lakshmi were bathing in the sacred Kama Kostam, Lord Narayana playfully concealed Himself behind a pillar and overheard their conversation. Kamakshi, noticing His presence, decided to discipline Him. With loving authority, She commanded Him first to stand, then to sit, and finally to recline. Thus, in this sacred kshetra, the Lord is uniquely found in all three postures—Nindra (standing), Irundha (sitting), and Kidantha (reclining)—on the northern bank of the temple tank. Because He had mischievously witnessed them while they bathed, Kamakshi affectionately yet firmly named Him "Kalvan" (the playful trespasser), and the shrine came to be celebrated as Thirukkalvanoor. Legends say that Emperor Dasaratha once came here to worship Mother Kamakshi and Kalva Perumal before performing the yajna that blessed him with sons. It was the Lord Himself who instructed him to undertake this worship. Even Sage Durvasa, though a great devotee of Lord Shiva, offered his homage to Lord Kalva Perumal here, affirming the temple's sanctity. Another unique feature is the presence of Goddess Mahalakshmi, who is depicted here in the act of worshipping the Lord, a vision that deepens the sanctity of the temple.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Adhi Varaha (Kalva) Perumal**
(*Standing posture* - facing West – Also, *Sitting and Reclining* posture – facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Anjilaivalli Nachiyar (Soundarya Lakshmi)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Nitya Pushkarini

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

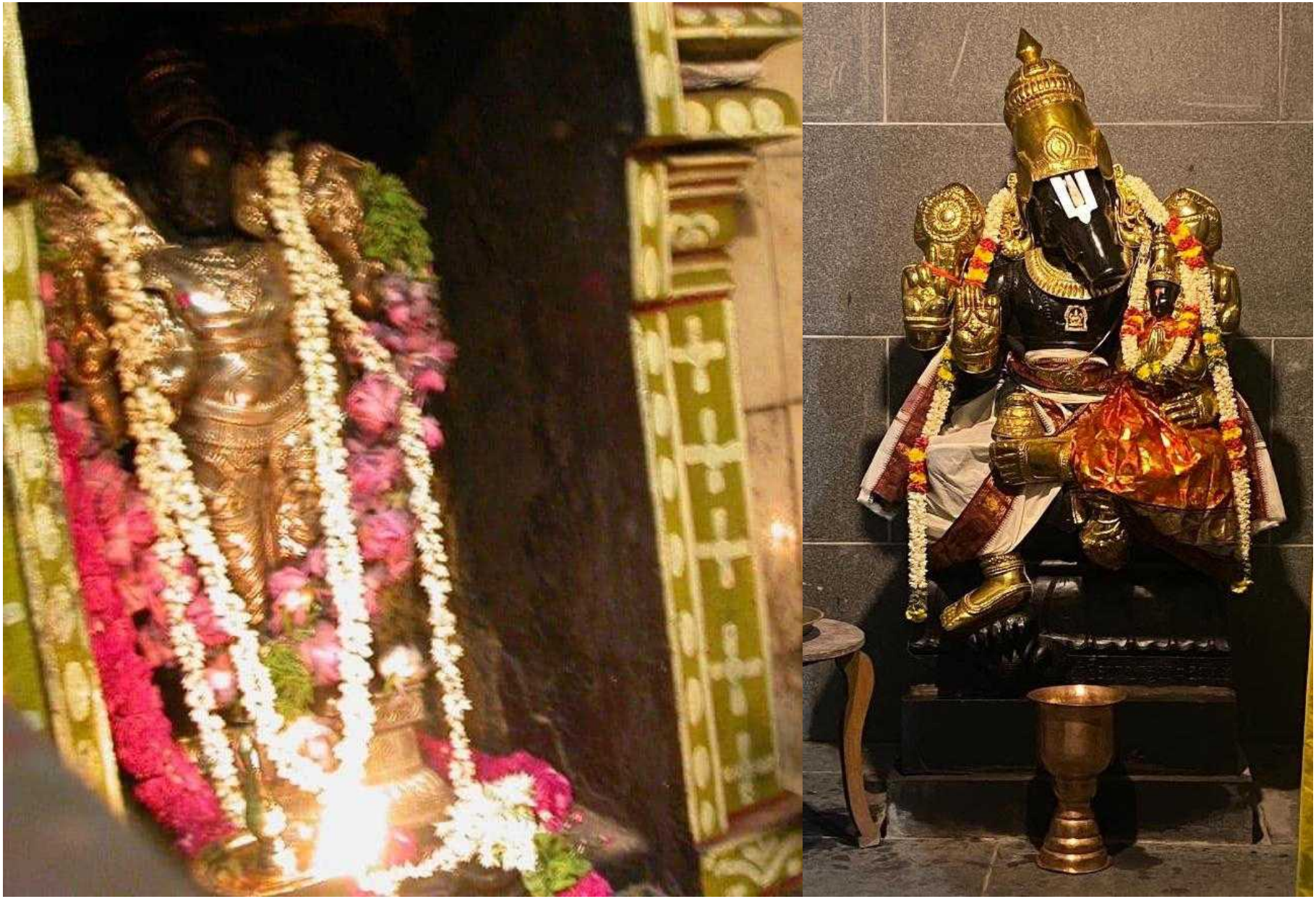
Vamana Vimana

**Devotees Blessed:**

Goddess Parvati, Goddess Lakshmi, Sage Durvasa

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Adhi Varaha (Kalva) Perumal sung by Tirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- The shrines of Adhi Varaha (Kalva) is a temple within a temple, a Divya Desam situated inside a great Shaiva kshetra. Pujas here follow Saivite tradition and are performed by Shivacharyas, not Vaishnava priests.



Lord Sri Adi Varaha Perumal and Goddess Anjilai Valli – Thirukkalvanur

# 55 Thiruppavalavannam and Thiruppachaivannam

**Sthalapuranam:**

In Svetadvipa, during a gentle exchange between Lord Vishnu (Thirumal) and His eternal consort, Thirumagal (Lakshmi), She lovingly expressed a wish—that the Lord, who bore the auspicious dark hue (karvarnam), might also shine in Coral-hued by receiving the grace of Lord Shiva. Though Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Being, the creator and sustainer of all, including the devas headed by Shiva and Brahma, yet to fulfill Lakshmi's desire and to enact His divine pastime, He chose to descend to Kanchipuram. There, with His discus, the Lord created a sacred tank and performed daily worship, offering fourteen thousand lotus flowers to Lord Veerattaneswarar. Puzzled yet curious at this act, Lord Shiva appeared with Goddess Uma and requested Lord Vishnu to assume a Coral-hued. Accepting this, the Lord manifested in resplendent brilliance, granting darshan to both Shiva and Uma. Thus, in this holy shrine, Lord Vishnu is venerated as Sri Pavala Vannar—shining forth in radiant coral-hued. This shrine is paired with the nearby Pacchai Vannar (Maragatha Vannar) Temple, situated opposite Pavala Vannar's sanctum. Lord Vishnu appears here in the green hue of an emerald, and is therefore called Pachai Vanna Perumal. Since He gave darshan only to Sage Marichi, He is seen alone in the sanctum without His consort. To the sage, He also appeared as Lord Rama with Mother Sita, and so He is worshipped in both forms. Though separate shrines, they are considered a single Divya Desam. The temple legends narrate that Vishnu manifested in different colours across the four yugas—white in Satya Yuga, red like coral (pavalam) in Treta Yuga, green (pachai) in Dvapara Yuga, and bluish-black (Shyamala varna) in Kali Yuga. Hence, He is revered as Pavala Vannar and Pacchai Vannar. Other traditions enrich the sanctity of this shrine. Sage Bhrigu, while testing the patience of the trinity, found Vishnu to be the most compassionate—enduring the sage's insult and yet relieving his pain. Vishnu then directed Bhrigu to Kanchipuram, where He revealed Himself as Pavala Vannar, with the sage's image still seen in worshipful pose within the sanctum. Another legend recalls Goddess Saraswati sending demons to disrupt Brahma's penance, where Vishnu protected Brahma, staining Himself red with their blood—hence being called Pravalesa or Pavala Vannar.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Pavalavanna Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing West) and **Lord Sri Pachaivanna Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Pavalavalli** and **Goddess Maragathavalli**

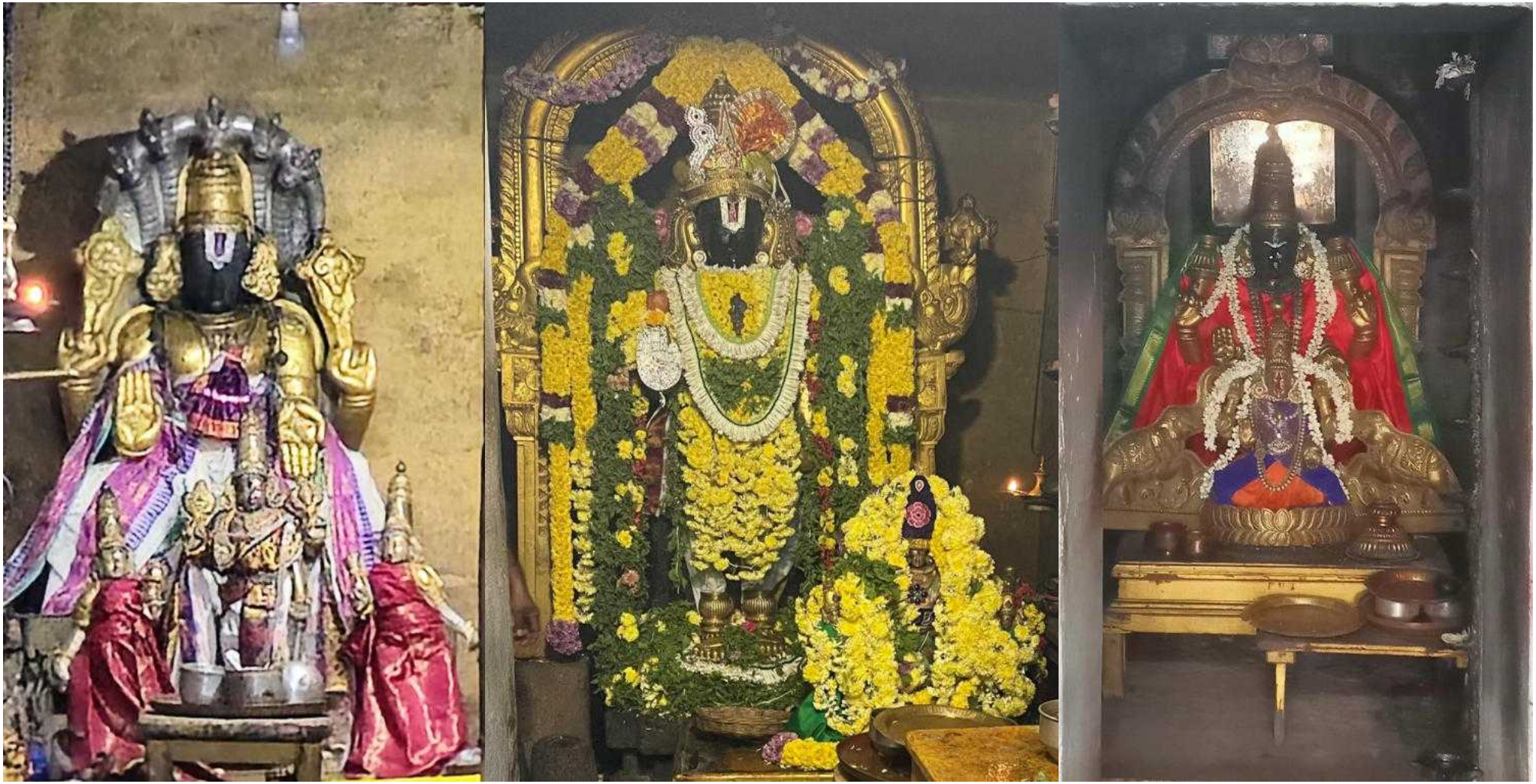
**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Chakra Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Pravala Vimanam and Valarpirai Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Marichi, Sage Bhrigu, Lord Brahma, Goddess Saraswati, Lord Shiva and Goddess Uma

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Pavalavanna Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- The Pavala Vannar (Coral-hued Lord) shrine is paired with the nearby Pachchai Vannar (Emerald-hued Lord) Temple, located directly opposite Pavala Vannar's sanctum.



Lord Sri Pavalavanna Perumal and Goddess Pavalavalli – Thiruppavalavannam, and Lord Sri Pachaivanna Perumal and Goddess Maragathavalli - Thiruppachaivannam

# 56 Thiru Parameswara Vinnagaram

**Sthalapuranam:**

Long ago, in the ancient land of Vidarbha Desa, there ruled a noble king named Virocha. Though virtuous in many ways, the weight of past misdeeds left him childless. Seeking divine grace, the king performed intense penance at the Kailasanathar Temple in Kanchipuram, invoking Lord Shiva's mercy. Moved by his devotion, Shiva granted him an extraordinary boon — that the Dvarapalas (celestial gatekeepers) of Lord Vishnu would be born as his sons on earth. In due time, the two radiant princes were born. From childhood, they were devoted to Lord Vishnu, performing yajnas and acts of service for the welfare of their people. Pleased by their devotion, Vishnu appeared before them in His glorious form as Vaikuntanatha, blessing them with eternal grace. It is believed that even today, He continues to appear to devotees in the same divine form that He revealed to those royal twins, known as Pallavan and Villalan. Another legend enriches the sanctity of this site. Once, Goddesses Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati descended to earth to perform penance, assisted by sages such as Atri, Bhrigu, Kashyapa, Kaundilya, Bharadwaja, and others. The combined power of their austerities was so immense that when the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—came to take their consorts back, they could not approach due to the radiance of the sages' penance. To distract the rishis, the gods sent down a celestial maiden. Sage Bharadwaja was enchanted by her beauty, and from their union a child was born. Overcome with remorse, the sage prayed to Brahma regarding the boy's destiny. In compassion, Vishnu and Brahma promised to care for the child. Vishnu took the guise of a hunter and raised the boy with fatherly affection, naming him Parameswara Varman. At that same time, a Pallava king, stricken by the sorrow of childlessness, was performing rigorous penance for a son. The divine hunter presented the boy to the king as his own child. The boy grew into King Parameswara Varman, a devout worshipper of Vishnu from his earliest days. The Lord Himself became his teacher, imparting to him the eighteen arts of life. When Parameswara's destined life span neared its end, Lord Vishnu, wishing to bless His devotee, reclined with His head towards the north—a direction considered inauspicious for rest. When Yama, the god of death, arrived, he was astonished to see this unusual posture of the Lord. Understanding its profound meaning, Yama hesitated. Vishnu declared that He would only move if Yama promised long life to His devotee. Bound by divine will, Yama obeyed and departed, thus granting the king longevity. In gratitude, King Parameswara Varman built a grand three-tiered temple to commemorate the Lord's three divine postures—standing, sitting, and reclining—symbolizing the Lord as Master, Teacher, and Protector. Before every royal battle—especially against their southern rivals, the Pandyas—the Pallava kings sought blessings from Lord Vaikuntanatha of this very temple.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal (Paramapadanatha, Ranganatha, Vaikuntanatha)**
(*Sitting posture* - facing West - also, *Standing and Reclining posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Vaikundavalli**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Ayrammadha Theertham and Viraja Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Ashtanga-Mukunda Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Yama, King Parameswara Varman, Pallavan and Villalan

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in ten hymn. He beautifully recorded the king's devotion in his hymns, referring to the temple as "Parameswara Vinnagaram", built by Parameswara Varman himself.

Lord Sri Vaikundanatha Perumal and Goddess Vaikundavalli - Thiru Parameswara Vinnagaram

# 57 Thiruputkuzhi

**Sthalapuranam:**

The legend occurred in different Kalpa – the day of Lord Brahma. When Lord Rama, obeying His father's command, left the royal comforts of Ayodhya to dwell in the forest with Sita and Lakshmana, destiny wove its divine play. One day, enchanted by a golden deer, Sita urged Rama to capture it. The deer, however, was the demon Maricha in disguise, sent by Ravana to separate the divine couple. While Rama and Lakshmana pursued the illusory deer, Ravana seized the moment to abduct Sita and carried her away in his aerial chariot towards Lanka. As Ravana flew over the dense forests of South India, the noble vulture Jatayu, a devoted servant of dharma and friend of King Dasaratha, intercepted him. The aged bird fought valiantly to rescue Sita, but Ravana, enraged, struck him down, severing his wings. Gravely wounded, Jatayu fell to the earth — at this very spot now known as Thiruputkuzhi. Soon after, Rama and Lakshmana, in search of Sita, came upon the dying bird. With great effort, Jatayu narrated the tragic events, revealing that Ravana had taken Sita southward. Overwhelmed with sorrow and gratitude, Rama embraced the noble bird, declaring that Jatayu's sacrifice surpassed even the offerings of sages and gods. Here, on this sacred ground, Lord Rama performed the final rites for Jatayu, granting him moksha (liberation). In remembrance of this divine act of compassion, Lord Vishnu is worshipped here as Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal, in the very form in which He performed Jatayu's last rites — seated with the bird resting upon His thigh. The temple tradition further tells that during festive processions, Lord Vijayaraghava rides majestically on His Horse Vahanam, which is so exquisitely crafted that devotees feel as if a real horse gallops through the streets. The artisan who made this masterpiece vowed never to recreate it for any mortal or deity. As a token of divine gratitude, the Lord, during every procession, halts before the craftsman's home to offer His respects. Thiruputkuzhi is also celebrated as a seat of learning. It is believed that Sri Ramanuja, the great Vaishnava acharya, studied Advaita philosophy under Yadava Prakasa at this very place. The ancient mandapam where these lessons were held still stands, a silent witness to the spiritual transformation that later led Ramanuja to propagate Vishishtadvaita philosophy.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Maragadhavalli** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Jatayu Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Vijayakoti (Veerakoti) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Jatayu, Sri Ramanuja, Horse Vahanam - artisan |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in two hymn.
- Great acharyas such as Vedanta Desika and Pinpazhagiya Perumal Jeeyar also composed works in reverence to the deity.

Lord Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal and Goddess Maragadhavalli – Thiruputkuzhi

# 58 Thirunindravur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Once, in the ancient age of divine play, a tender episode unfolded between Lord Perumal and His eternal consort, Mother Mahalakshmi. Owing to certain reasons, Mahalakshmi—also known as Tiru—left Her celestial abode in Vaikuntha and came down to this earth, choosing to stand and reside at this very place. Because the Divine Mother stood (nindra) here, the region came to be called Tiru Nindra Oor—"the sacred place where Tiru stood." Her father, Samudra Raja—the King of the Oceans, for Mahalakshmi was born from the milk ocean—was filled with concern for his beloved daughter. Seeing her upset, he came to her, spoke soothingly, and entreated her to return to her Lord, Perumal. But the Divine Mother, still hurt, refused to go back. Moved by her steadfastness, Samudra Raja went to Perumal and humbly begged the Lord to come and take back His beloved consort. The compassionate Lord assured the Ocean King, "Go before Me; I shall follow and reconcile with Her Myself." When Samudra Raja returned, he addressed Mahalakshmi with great reverence, saying, "You are not merely my daughter—you are my Ennai Pettra Thayar, the Mother who gave me birth." Deeply moved by his devotion, he pleaded with Her to return to Vaikuntha and reign alongside Perumal once again. At that moment, Lord Perumal Himself appeared, joining in the reconciliation. Seeing the devotion and humility of both, Mahalakshmi's heart melted, and She joyfully rejoined Her Lord. Because the Lord heeded the sincere prayers of His devotee Samudra Raja, He came to be known as Bhaktavatsalan—the One who is tenderly affectionate toward His devotees. And since Samudra Raja addressed Mahalakshmi as Ennai Pettra Thayar, that divine name became eternally associated with Her shrine here. As prayed by the Ocean King, the divine couple now stand together in their wedding posture, radiating grace and compassion upon all who come to worship. According to the temple's Sthala Purana, Lord Bhaktavatsala once appeared to Kubera, the god of wealth, and in another account, to Varuna, the god of the waters, who worshipped Him here. A beautiful legend links the Thirunindravur temple with the great saint Tirumangai Alvar. When the Alvar visited the shrine during his pilgrimage, he composed no hymns there. Seeing this, Goddess Mahalakshmi wished to hear his divine verses in praise of Her Lord. To fulfil Her desire, Perumal Himself went to the Alvar—who was then at Mamallapuram—and humbly requested a song. Moved by the Lord's compassion, Tirumangai Alvar sang a single verse describing how the Supreme Lord personally came to him seeking a hymn. However, Mahalakshmi longed for a full set of ten verses (pathigam), as was the Alvar's practice. Once again, the Lord went in search of Tirumangai Alvar, now at Thirukkannamangai. Beholding the Lord's gracious form and tender glance, the saint was overwhelmed with devotion and composed a pathigam of ten verses on the Lord of Thirukkannamangai, also including praise for Bhaktavatsala Perumal of Thirunindravur. This place also known as Srinivasa Kshethram.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Bhaktavatsala (Bhaktaravi) Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Sudhavalli (Ennai Pettra Thayar)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Varuna Pushkarni and Virutha Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Srinivasa (Utpala) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Varuna, Kubera, Samudra Raja, Goddess Lakshmi and Tirumangai Alvar |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Bhaktavatsala Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in two hymn. |

Lord Sri Bhaktavatsala Perumal and Goddess Sudhavalli – Thirunindravur

# 59 Thiruvallur (Thiruevvul)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Once, a great sage named Salihotra performed intense penance on the banks of the sacred temple tank at this holy place. For a full year, he lived a life of prayer and simplicity, offering daily worship to Lord Vishnu. When his year-long austerity concluded, it was the month of Thai (January–February). The sage prepared a small quantity of flour as nivedhana (offering) to the Lord and then, as was his practice, waited to share it with someone before partaking of it himself. At that moment, an old Brahmin appeared and asked for food. The sage, pleased to see a guest, offered him the flour. But the guest, still hungry, asked for more. Without hesitation, the saint gave away his remaining portion too. Having nothing left for himself, the sage cheerfully accepted his hunger and began another year of penance without food, fasting and praying to the Lord with renewed devotion. After this second year of penance, the same old Brahmin appeared once again and asked for food. Salihotra joyfully prepared the flour and offered it to him. The Brahmin ate everything and then said, "Give me a place (evvul—meaning 'where') to rest." The sage humbly offered his hermitage for the guest's comfort. In that very instant, the old Brahmin revealed Himself as Lord Vishnu in a majestic reclining form, radiant and merciful. The Lord, moved by Salihotra's unselfish devotion, said, "Ask what you desire." The sage bowed with folded hands and prayed, "O Lord, may You stay here forever and bless all devotees who come to You, removing their sufferings and granting them peace." The Lord granted this boon and thus came to be worshipped here as Sri Veera Raghava Perumal, the compassionate healer of all ailments and sorrows. According to the Markandeya Purana, Salihotra was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu who lived by grinding rice daily, offering half to the needy, and eating the rest. To test his faith, Lord Vishnu came as a hungry guest and, after being fed, asked for more and for shelter. When the sage willingly gave all he had, the Lord revealed His divine form and blessed him, promising to stay here eternally for the welfare of devotees. Another legend tells that Lord Vishnu appeared here to marry Goddess Lakshmi, who had been born on earth as the daughter of King Dilipa of Dharmasenapura. Their divine wedding took place at this very spot. For this reason, the place is also known as Thiru Evvul or Viksaranyam, meaning "the holy forest of vision." A further story connects Lord Shiva to this temple. After Daksha's yagna, where Shiva was insulted and his consort Dakshayani perished, Shiva created Veerabhadra to destroy Daksha. Having incurred the sin of Brahma-hatya (killing a Brahmin) because of this act, Shiva came here to the temple tank to cleanse himself. On the northern bank of the sacred tank stands a shrine dedicated to Theertheswarar, representing Shiva's purification at this holy site. This place is also known as Punyavartha or Veeksharanya Kshetram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Veera Raghava Perumal** (**Sri Vaidya Veera Raghava Perumal**)
*(Veera (Bhujanga) Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)*

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Kanakavalli (Vasumathi)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Hrithatapa Naasini Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Vijayakoti Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Lord Shiva, Sage Salihotra and King Dilipa

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Veeraraghava Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in eleven hymn and Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn.
- Lord Veera Raghava Perumal is revered as the Divine Physician (Vaidya). Devotees suffering from bodily ailments pray at His shrine for three consecutive new moon days to receive healing and relief. In this sacred role, He is worshipped as Sri Vaidya Veera Raghava Perumal.

Lord Sri Vaidya Veeraraghava Perumal and Goddess Kanakavalli - Thiruvallur (Thiruevvul)

# 60 Thiruvallikeni

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to legend, King Sumathirajan, a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, longed to see the Lord in the form of Arjuna's charioteer. He performed intense prayers and penance, and the Lord appeared before him as Parthasarathy, holding the reins of Arjuna's chariot. The king pleaded with the Lord to remain in that form forever at this sacred spot. The Lord graciously consented, and thus, He is enshrined here as Parthasarathy. During the battle of Kurukshetra, though Krishna vowed not to wield any weapon, He bore the arrows of Bhishma that were aimed at Arjuna. Out of love and protection for His devotee, the Lord took the wounds upon Himself. Even today, the marks of those arrows can be seen on the divine image of Parthasarathy at Thiruvallikeni. As per another legend, Sage Bhrigu once performed penance here to have the Lord as his son-in-law. During his prayers, he found a female child inside a lotus in the temple tank, whom he named Vedavalli. When she reached marriageable age, Lord Ranganatha appeared and wedded her. Sage Atreya once asked Sage Vedavyasa for a suitable place to perform penance. Vedavyasa advised him to go to Brindaranya, the land blessed by King Sumathi's austerities, and gave him a divine image of Vishnu holding a conch and showing Jnana Mudra. Atreya installed and worshipped the Lord there. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Narasimha also appeared to Sage Atri and chose to reside in this holy place. Among these, Lord Gajendra Varadar is associated with the divine incident of saving the elephant Gajendra from a crocodile. When the devotee cried for help, the Lord rushed on Garuda, struck down the crocodile with His discus, and granted liberation to Gajendra. Sage Saptaroma is believed to have worshipped this form of the Lord according to the Vaikhanasa Agama. Another legend tells that Sage Madhuman, son of Sashivadan, came to Brindaranya after hearing the story of Lord Rama from Sage Gargeya. Here, he performed severe penance and was blessed with the vision of Lord Rama, appearing with Sita Devi, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. The temple also has a deep connection with Sri Ramanuja. His father, Asuri Kesava Somayaji, performed a Putrakameshti Yagna at the temple's sacred tank, Kairavini Theertham, praying for a virtuous son. Lord Parthasarathy appeared in his dream and promised to be born as his son to spread the message of the Bhagavad Gita. Later, Ramanuja fulfilled this divine mission through his Bhagavad Gita Bhashya, a renowned commentary on the Gita. Thiruvallikeni became the abode of five main deities known as the Pancha Murtis — Lord Venkatakrishna (Parthasarathy), Lord Ranganatha, Lord Rama, Lord Gajendra Varadar, and Lord Yoga Narasimha — making the temple a rare "Panchamurthy Sthala." And also known as Brindhaaranya Kshethram or Thiruvallikeni.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Venkatakrishna Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Vedavalli Thayar**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):** Lord Sri Parthasarathy

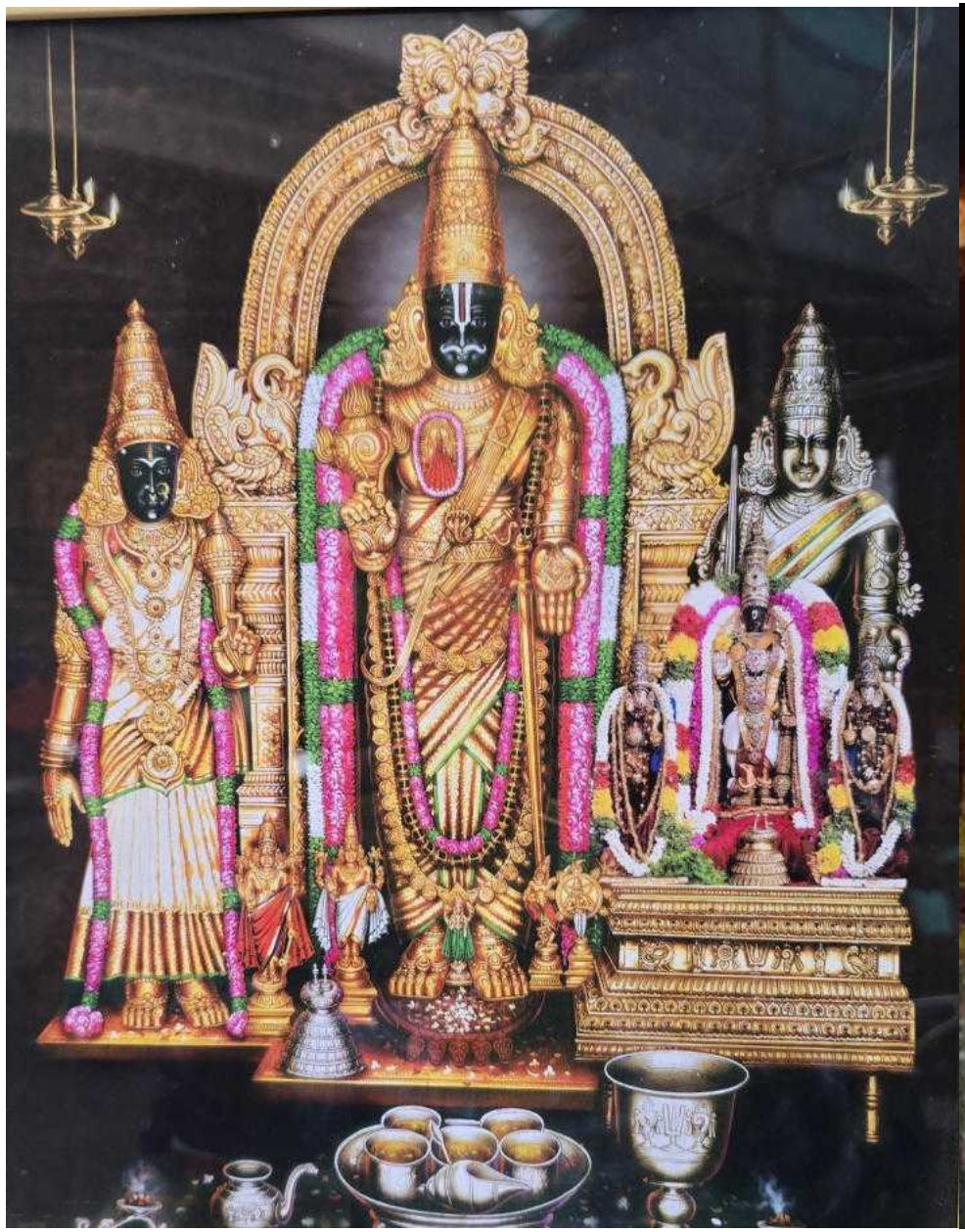
**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Kairavani Saras (Allikeni)

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Ananta, Pranava, Pushpaka, Sesha, and Daiviga Vimanas

**Devotees Blessed:** Goddess Rukmini, King Thondaiman, King Sumathirajan, Arjuna, Bhrigu Maharishi, Markandeya, Madhuman, Saptaroma, the Saptarishis, Atri Maharishi, Jajali, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and Balarama.

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Venkatakrishna Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in ten hymn, Pey Alvar in one hymn and Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn.
- Five deities of the temple has an individual sanctum, and there are separate flag posts (Dwajasthambas) for both Parthasarathy (facing east) and Yoga Narasimha (facing west).



Lord Sri Venkatakrishna Perumal and Goddess Rukmini - Thiruvallikeni

# 61 Thiruneermalai (Thoyachalam)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiruneermalai, located near Chennai, is an ancient and sacred Vishnu temple site, counted among the eight holy places where the Lord manifested by Himself — the Ashta Svayam Vyaktha Kshetrams. The place was once known as Toyatri, meaning "a mountain surrounded by water." Its present Tamil name, Thiruneermalai, carries the same meaning — "a sacred hill encircled by water." According to legend, Sage Valmiki, after composing the epic Ramayana, came here to worship Lord Ranganatha at the top of the hill. Deeply moved by devotion, he prayed to behold Lord Rama along with His divine retinue. Responding to his prayer, the Lord manifested before him in the form of Rama, accompanied by Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Shatrughna, and Hanuman. In this divine appearance, Goddess Lakshmi took the form of Sita, Adi Sesha appeared as Lakshmana, the Lord's conch Panchajanya became Bharata, His discus Sudarshana Chakra took the form of Shatrughna, and Garuda appeared as Hanuman. This celestial vision sanctified the hill and established Thiruneermalai (Thoyachalam) as a place of divine revelation. Another legend recounts that the poet-saint Thirumangai Alvar once came to Thiruneermalai to worship the Lord. At that time, the entire hill was surrounded by water, and he had to wait for six months until the waters receded before he could climb up to have darshan. The name "Neermalai" — "Hill of Water" — arose from this event. Thiruneermalai is unique in structure and legend, as the temple complex exists in two levels — one at the base of the hill and the other at the top. At the base temple, the presiding deity is Lord Neervanan Perumal, seen in a standing posture (Ninran), with His consort Animamalar Mangai Thayar. The shrines of Kalyana Ramar and Andal are also found here. To the right of the steps leading uphill stands a shrine dedicated to Lord Hanuman. The hill temple, situated above, has three shrines where the Lord manifests in different forms and postures — Lord Ranganatha in reclining posture (Kidanthaan – Manikka Shayanam), Lord Shanta Narasimha in sitting posture (Irundhaan), and Lord Trivikrama in walking posture (Nadanthaan). There is also a separate shrine for Goddess Ranganayaki Thayar, facing east.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Neervanna Perumal (Neela Mugil Vannan)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Animamalar Mangai** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Manikarnika Thadaakam, Ksheera Pushkarni, Kaarunya Pushkarni, Siddha Pushkarni, Swarna Pushkarni |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Thooyagiri Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Valmiki, King Thondaiman, Sage Bhirgu, Sage Markandeya, Thirumangai Alvar and Bhoothath Alvar |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Neervanna Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in ninteen hymns and Bhoothath Alvar in one hymn.
- Thiruneermalai is unique in structure as the temple complex exists in two levels — one at the base of the hill and the other at the top.

Lord Sri Neervanna Perumal and Goddess Animamalar Mangai - Thiruneermalai

# 62 Thiruvidaventhai

**Sthalapuranam:**

In the Treta Yuga, there lived a powerful and noble king named Bali, son of King Meganatha. Though virtuous and respected, he was drawn into a war between the asuras and the celestial deities. At first, Bali refused to help the asura kings—Mali, Malyavan, and Sumali—but later agreed when they pleaded again. Under his command, the asuras defeated the Devas. However, by taking arms against the celestial beings, Bali incurred the grave sin of Brahmahatya Dosha. To atone, he came to Thiruvidandhai and performed deep penance to Lord Vishnu. Pleased with his repentance and devotion, the Lord appeared before him as Sri Varaha Perumal—the divine boar incarnation—and absolved him of his sin, granting him peace and liberation. In ancient times, there lived a sage named Kuni, who along with his daughter performed penance with the desire to ascend to heaven. Due to his intense austerities, the sage attained heaven, but his daughter was unable to follow. Sage Narada appeared before her and explained that an unmarried woman cannot enter heaven. Seeking deliverance, she wandered to various hermitages asking sages to accept her as their wife, but none agreed. Finally, she met Sage Kalava Rishi, who resided at Thiruvidavendhai. The compassionate sage agreed to marry her, and in due course, she gave birth to 360 daughters. When these daughters grew up, Sage Kalava was deeply troubled by the responsibility of finding suitable grooms for all of them. In great distress, he prayed to Lord Vishnu for help. Days passed, but the Lord did not appear immediately. One day, a handsome young bachelor arrived at Thiruvidavendhai during his pilgrimage. Sage Kalava welcomed him and requested that he marry his daughters. The youth consented — but said he would marry one daughter each day. Thus, the marriages continued daily for 360 days. On the final day, the youth revealed His true identity — He was none other than Lord Varaha Perumal Himself. At that moment, all 360 daughters merged into one radiant divine form — Goddess Lakshmi. The Lord seated Her on His left lap and blessed the sage. Since the first daughter's name was Komalavalli, the Goddess came to be known as Komalavalli Thayar. And as all the 360 daughters merged into one, She is also worshipped as Akilavalli Thayar. The Lord, who married one maiden each day throughout the year, came to be known as Nithyakalyana Perumal — "the Lord of Eternal Marriage." The legend of Thiruvidavendhai recounts Lord Vishnu's Varaha incarnation, when He rescued the Earth Goddess Bhudevi from the asura Hiranyaksha, who had hidden her in the cosmic ocean. After slaying the demon and restoring the Earth, the Lord accepted Bhudevi's love and seated her on His lap—a scene beautifully depicted in the temple's deity, where the Goddess rests on His left thigh. Another legend tells of a devout king named Harikesari Varman, who visited the Thiruvidavendhai temple daily from nearby Thirukadalmallai (Mahabalipuram), partaking of his meal only after having the Lord's darshan. Pleased by his unwavering devotion, Lord Nitya Kalyana Perumal Himself appeared at Thirukadalmallai. That sacred place came to be known as Thiruvadavendhai, where the deity is said to be the exact mirror image of the Lord enshrined at Thiruvidavendhai.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Lakshmi Varaha Perumal (Sri Adhi Varaha Perumal)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Komalavalli Nachiyar (Agillavalli Nachiyar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Nitya Kalyana Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Varaha Theertham, Kalyana Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kalyana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Bali Maharaj, Sage Kalava, King Harikesari Varman, 360 daughters of Sage Kuni, and Sage Markandeya |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Lakshmi Varaha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in thirteen hymn.

Lord Sri Sri Lakshmi Varaha Perumal and Goddess Komalavalli – Thiruvidaventhai

# 63 Thirukkadanmallai

**Sthalapuranam:**

Among all the Divya Desams, this sacred shrine is unique—for here, Lord Vishnu reclines directly upon the bare floor, earning Him the name Sthala Sayana Perumal, the "Lord who reclines on the ground." The word Sthalam means "floor," and unlike other reclining forms, He lies here with four arms yet without His usual Conch and Discus. His front hands rest upon the ground pointing toward His lotus feet; the right rear hand supports His head as a pillow, while the left is raised gracefully. Once, Sage Pundareeka Maharishi discovered a lake filled with rare lotuses of a thousand petals. Filled with devotion, he desired to offer these flowers to Lord Vishnu in His form as Ksheerabdhi Natha, reclining in the Ocean of Milk. While collecting the flowers, a crocodile suddenly attacked him. The sage, instead of reacting with fear, gazed upon the creature with compassion. Instantly, the crocodile transformed into a man. He revealed that he had once been a king and a devout worshipper of Lord Vishnu. But one day, he had refused food to a Brahmin and, as a result of the curse, was born as a crocodile. By the sage's kind glance, the curse was lifted, and the king gratefully departed. Still intent on his offering, Sage Pundareeka gathered the thousand-petalled lotuses and began to drain the sea, hoping to reach the celestial abode of Thiruparkadal to offer them personally. At that time, an old man appeared and humbly asked for food. The sage wished to serve him but did not want to interrupt his sacred task. Understanding this, the old man offered to continue the work while the sage fetched food. When Pundareeka returned, he was astonished—the old man was lying on the bare floor, adorned with the very lotus garland meant for the Lord. At that moment, divine realization dawned upon the sage—the old man was none other than Lord Vishnu Himself, who had appeared to bless His devotee. The Lord manifested in the same reclining posture upon the ground, without His divine weapons, granting vision to His devotee who sought Him as Ksheerabdhi Natha. Hence, He is also revered as Artha Sethu, the Lord who became a bridge between the devotee's effort and divine grace. The place also known as Artha Sethu Kshethram. Even today, Sage Pundareeka Maharishi is seen within the sanctum, standing with folded hands at the Lord's lotus feet. Another tale speaks of Sage Agastya, who visited the temple and was divinely instructed to reside at the northern bank of the temple tank, Pundareeka Theertham, in the place known as Astavasramam.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Sthalasayana Perumal**<br>*(Sthala Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Boosthalamangadevi (Nilamangai Thayar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Ulagu Uyya Nindran (Sthalasayanathuraivar) |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Punnai |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Pundareeka Theertham and Garuda River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Gaganakruthi Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Pundareeka and Sage Agastya |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Sthalasayana Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in twenty-six hymns and Bhoothath Alvar in one hymn.
- Bhoothath Alvar, one among the twelve revered Alvars, is believed to have manifested miraculously from a Madhavi flower that blossomed in the sacred pond at Mahabalipuram, also known as Thirukadalmallai.

Lord Sri Sthalasayana Perumal and Goddess Boosthalamangadevi – Thirukkadanmallai

# 64 Thirukkadigai (Sholasimhapuram)

**Sthalapuranam:**

At the end of Lord Rama's incarnation, Hanuman wished to accompany Him to Vaikuntha. However, Lord Rama instructed Hanuman to remain on earth and protect the sages at Sholingur from the attacks of demons. As a token of divine power, Rama gave Hanuman the sacred conch (shankha) and discus (chakra) of Lord Narayana. Obeying his Lord's command, Hanuman came to Sholingur, destroyed the asuras, and continued to stay there in meditation. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Narasimha appeared before Hanuman and blessed him to remain there as Yoga Anjaneya, assuring him that he would become next Brahma. Even today, devotees believe that Yoga Anjaneya is ever engaged in divine meditation on Lord Narasimha. On Periya Malai (the big hill), Lord Yoga Narasimha faces east in a calm and meditative form. Thirumangai Azhwar referred to Him as Thakkan and Akkarakani ("the sweet fruit"). Historically, Sholingur was known as Cholasimhapuram and later became Sholinghur. Ancient scriptures call it Kadigachalam or Thirukadigai or Gatikachalam, as it is believed that worshipping here for one Kadigai (24 minutes) grants divine blessings. Peyalvar called the presiding deity "Vaan Poonkadigai Ilankumaran," and other legends name Him Bhakotchita Swami. The Vishnu Purana and Padma Purana mention this sacred place as Kadigai, and since Sage Vishwamitra attained the title of Brahmarishi here, it was also known as Simhapuram. The place became an important center of Vishnu worship, associated with both Lord Narasimha and Yoga Anjaneya. The saint Doddacharya, a descendant of Mudaliandan and follower of Sri Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita philosophy, served here. Known for his devotion and miracles, Doddacharya received royal patronage and temple endowments from Achyuta Deva Raya during the 16th century.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Yoga Narasimha Perumal (Akkaarakkani)**
Atop of Gatikachalam Hill - (*Sitting posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Amritavalli Thayar**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):**

Sri Bakthavatsala Perumal

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Amrudha Theertham and Thakkan Pond

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

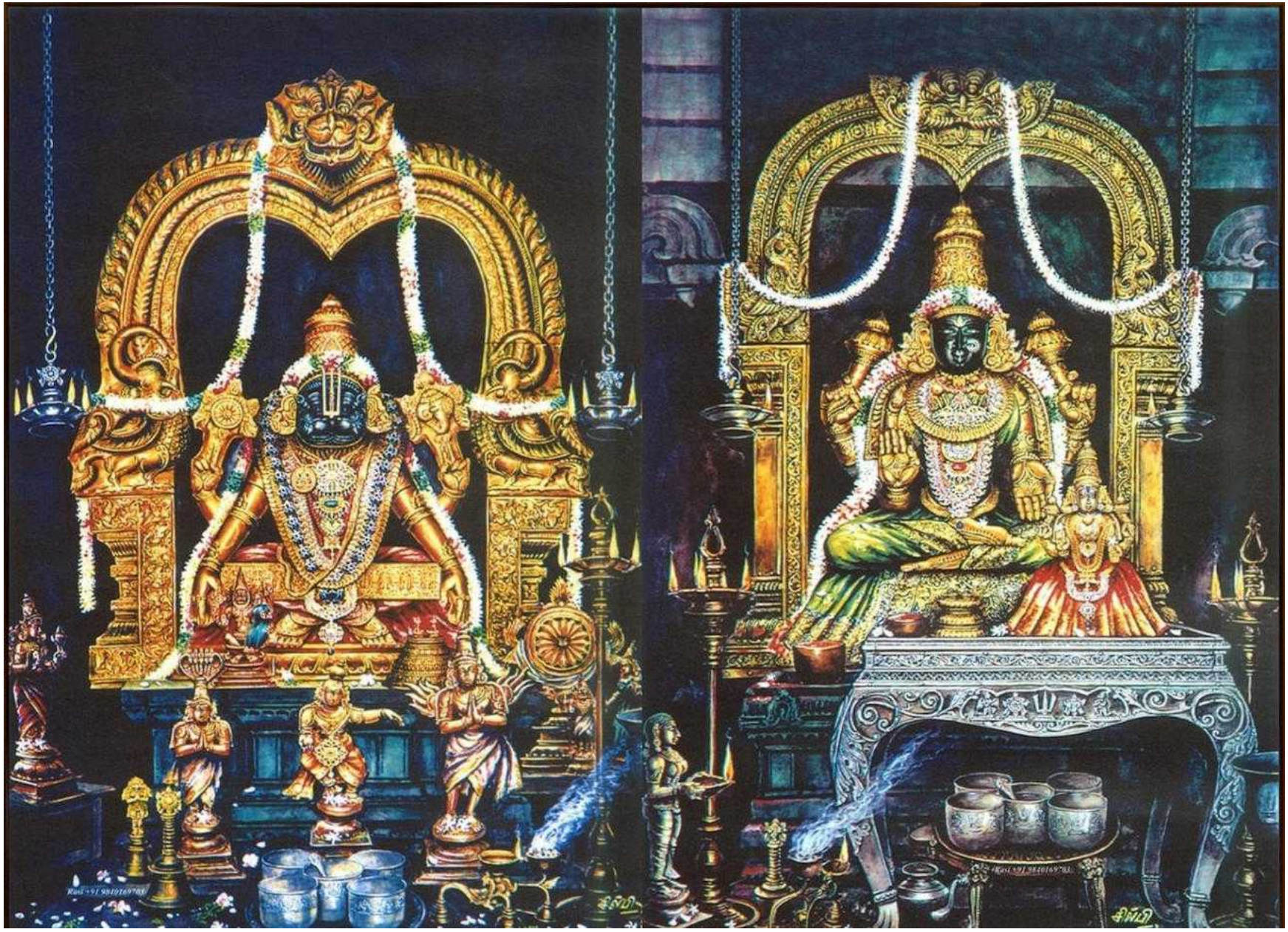
Simha Koshtakruthi Vimanam (Simhagra)

**Devotees Blessed:**

Hanuman and Sage Vishwamitra

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Yoga Narasimha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in three hymns and Pey Alvar in one hymn.
- The temple comprises two sacred hills — Periya Malai (the Big Hill) with 1,305 steps leading to the shrine of Lord Yoga Narasimha, and Chinna Malai (the Small Hill) with 450 steps ascending to the shrine of Lord Hanuman. Additionally, at the foothill in Sholingur town, there is a temple dedicated to the Utsava (processional) deity, where all major festivities and celebrations are conducted.



Lord Sri Yoga Narasimha Perumal and Goddess Amritavalli - Thirukkadigai

# 65 Thirunavai

**Sthalapuranam:**

At Tirunavaya, Lord Vishnu is worshipped as Navamukunda Perumal (or Navamukunda Tevar). According to legend, the deity was the ninth one installed at the temple by a group of nine great sages known as the Navayogis. The first eight deities mysteriously sank into the earth soon after being consecrated by each yogi, and even the ninth deity began to sink after it installed. It stopped by ninth yogi only when it had gone down to its knees, and thus the present deity is seen only from above the knees. For this reason, Tirunavaya is also known as Navayogisthala, the sacred abode of the nine yogis. Another legend says that Goddess Lakshmi and Gajendra, the king of elephants, both worshipped Lord Vishnu here using lotus flowers from the same nearby lake. As both drew from the same source, the flowers began to run short. Gajendra, distressed, prayed to the Lord for help. Moved by his devotion, Vishnu appeared with Lakshmi seated beside Him on the same throne and graciously accepted Gajendra's worship. The deity of Navamukunda is visible only from the knees upward, while the lower part remains buried in the earth. Behind the deity is said to be a bottomless, unexplored pit, adding to the mystery and sanctity of this ancient shrine.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Navamukunda Perumal (Narayana)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Malarmangai Nachiyar (Sirudevi Nachiyar)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Senkamala Saras (Lotus Pond) and Bharata-puzha (River) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Veda Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Goddess Lakshmi, Gajendra and Nava Yogis |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Navamukunda Perumal sung by Thirumangai Alvar in two hymns and Nammalvar in eleven hymns. |

Lord Sri Navamukunda Perumal and Goddess Malarmangai – Thirunavai

# 66 Thiruvithuvakodu

**Sthalapuranam:**

It is said that the five Pandava brothers—Arjuna, Dharmaraja, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva—installed five separate deities of Lord Vishnu here for their daily worship. The principal deity, or Moolavar, was installed by Arjuna, while the other deities were consecrated on the southern and northern sides by his brothers. Yet another legend adds to the temple's sanctity. Pleased with the devotion of a rishi, Lord Kasi Viswanatha (Shiva) granted him a place within his umbrella as a mark of His presence. After completing his ritual bath, the sage discovered that his umbrella had broken open, revealing a self-manifested Shiva Linga. A separate shrine was later constructed at that spot. Because of these divine manifestations—the deities installed by the Pandavas and the self-manifested Shiva—the place came to be known as the "Anchu Murti Kovil - Temple of Five deities". It is also believed that King Ambarisha of Ayodhya attained moksha at this sacred kshetram. Situated on the western banks of the Bharathapuzha River stands the ancient Uyavantha Perumal Divya Desam at Thiruvithuvakkodu, praised in the hymns of the saint Kulasekara Alvar.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Abhayapradhaya (Uyyavantha) Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing South) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Vithuvakoduvalli (Padmabani Nachiyar)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chakra Theertham and Bharata-puzha (River) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Thatvakanchana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Ambarisha, Five Pandava brothers—Arjuna, Dharmaraja, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Abhayapradhaya Perumal sung by Kulasekara Alvar in Ten hymns. |

Lord Sri Abhayapradhaya (Uyyavantha) Perumal and Goddess Vithuvakoduvalli – Thiruvithuvakodu

# 67 Thirukatkarai

**Sthalapuranam:**

The Bhagavata Purana narrates the divine descent of Lord Vishnu as Vamana, the dwarf Brahmin incarnation, to humble the noble but proud Asura King Mahabali and restore the heavenly dominion of Indra. Mahabali, grandson of Prahlada and son of Virochana, was renowned for his generosity, devotion, and valor. Through penance, he attained great power and fame, but pride gradually clouded his virtue. To curb this pride and reestablish cosmic balance, Lord Vishnu appeared as Vamana, a radiant young Brahmin carrying a palm-leaf umbrella. During a grand yajna, He requested from Bali three paces of land. Despite his guru Sukracharya's caution, Bali agreed. The Lord then manifested His vast form as Trivikrama, spanning the heavens with one step and the earth with another. With no space left for the third, Bali humbly offered his own head. Pleased by his surrender, the Lord placed His foot upon it, granting him immortality and rulership over Rasatala (the netherworld), promising that he would one day become Indra. The Thiru Katkarai Appan Divya Desam is venerated as the sacred site where Lord Vishnu appeared as Vamana Moorthy to subdue King Bali. The presiding deity, Lord Katkarai Appan, stands holding the Conch, Chakra, and Lotus. Every year, on Thiruvonam it is believed that the Bali Maharaj revisits this temple to commemorate the divine event. A shrine to Lord Shiva (Paramasivan) also stands beside the sanctum, depicting King Bali offering his prayers to Shiva—symbolizing the harmony of divine devotion and humility. Another beautiful legend associated with this sacred site tells of a wealthy man who owned a vast plantain grove but suffered years of poor yield despite his efforts. Out of deep faith, he offered a few plantains—and in some versions, even a golden plantain sapling—to Lord Katkarai Appan, seeking the Lord's grace. Pleased by his devotion and humility, the Lord blessed him abundantly. Thereafter, his grove flourished with luxuriant, golden-hued plantains of exceptional quality. These miraculous fruits came to be known as Nenthiram Palam, and the grove itself became famed throughout the region for its divine blessing and association with Lord Katkarai Appan. However, when the reigning king heard of this wonder, he grew suspicious, believing that the miracle involved his own wealth. In his misunderstanding, he unjustly punished a holy sage who had spoken of the Lord's divine grace. Stricken by sorrow, the sage cursed the king. Realizing his grave mistake, the repentant ruler sought the counsel of wise sages, who advised him to perform a ritual using a bamboo thatch and a flame lit with sacred grass. Through this humble act of penance and surrender, the king was freed from the curse, and harmony was restored.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Thrikkakara Vamanamoorthy (Katkaraippan) Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing South) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Vathsalyavalli Nachiyar (Perunchellva Nayaki)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Appan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kapila Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pushkala Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Bali Maharaj, Wealthy Man, Sage Kapila |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Katkaraippan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns. |

Lord Sri Thrikkakara Vamanamoorthy (Katkaraippan) Perumal and Goddess Vathsalyavalli – Thirukatkarai

# 68 Thirumoozhikkalam

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to legend, when Bharata came searching for Rama during his exile, Lakshmana mistook his approach as a hostile act and prepared for battle. However, Rama gently calmed his brother and revealed Bharata's pure intentions. Overcome with remorse for having doubted him, Lakshmana came to this place to atone for his mistake. In remembrance of this act of repentance, Lakshmana became the presiding deity (Mulavar) of the shrine. Another legend tells of Sage Harita, who performed penance here. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Vishnu appeared before him. When the sage asked how men could follow the path of Varnasrama Dharma, Vishnu uttered sacred words of wisdom. From this divine speech, the place came to be known as Thirumoozhikkalam — meaning "the holy place where sacred words were spoken." In his hymns, the saint Nammazhvar praises the Lord of Thirumoozhikkalam as being radiant and supremely beautiful, adorned with lotus-like eyes and garlands of fragrant tulasi. He describes the flower groves of this sacred place as exuding nectar-like sweetness, filling the air with divine fragrance. In his opening verse, Nammazhvar calls upon true devotees to visit Thirumoozhikkalam and seek the blessings of the Lord, whom he lovingly refers to as the "pot dancer." While most of the Divya Desams around Chengannur are linked to episodes from the Mahabharata, Thirumoozhikkalam is unique for its association with the Ramayaṇa and is dedicated to Lakshmana.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Sookthinatha (Lakshmana) Perumal (Thirumoozhikkallathaan)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Madhuraveni Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Appan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Shanka Theertham, Chittraaru (River), Perunkulam |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Soundarya Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Harita |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Lakshmana Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns and Thirumangai Alvar in three hymns.
- This temple is one among the four shrines (Nalambalam) in the region that honor the four divine brothers — Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna.

Lord Sri Sookthinatha (Lakshmana) Perumal and Goddess Madhuraveni – Thirumoozhikkalam

# 69 Thiruvallavazh

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to legend, this holy site is where the Lord appeared in the form of a young Brahmachari to protect His devotee and restore righteousness. In the ancient village of Mallikavanam lived a devout widow, Sreedevi Antharjanam, from the pious Sankaramangalath family. Though illiterate, she observed every Ekadashi fast with great sincerity, counting the days by placing pebbles in a pot. The demon Thukalasuran had been terrorizing the land, devouring humans and spreading fear. When Antharjanam prayed helplessly to Lord Vishnu for protection, a radiant young Brahmachari carrying a golden staff appeared at her door seeking alms. The aged devotee, feeling blessed, requested him to wait until she finished her worship. But the youth went straight to the river where the demon lived. There, he confronted Thukalasuran, and in a flash, his golden staff transformed into the Sudarshana Chakra. With it, he destroyed the asura and his army. The young ascetic then subdued a fierce yakshini who haunted the nearby forest and installed a Durga idol to guard the region. The place where the Lord's discus fell became the very site of the present temple—thus the area came to be called Chakrapuram, the land of the divine Chakra. After the victory, the Brahmachari returned to Antharjanam's home with five companions. She served them a simple meal on areca leaves, as the demon had destroyed the banana trees. When she lamented that she had no pickles to offer, Goddess Lakshmi, moved by her devotion, appeared in disguise and served the traditional thrippuli pickle. At that moment, the young ascetic revealed His true identity. Removing His shawl, He showed the Srivatsa mark on His chest and the Goddess Lakshmi seated within, and He manifested His cosmic form. The pious Antharjanam, her servant, and her family entered into His divine presence and attained liberation. The five young Brahmins accompanying the Lord were revealed to be Sage Durvasa and his disciples. This divine event, tradition says, occurred around 2998 BC, and the Sankaramangalath house, near the western gate of the temple, is still preserved as the original sacred site. Centuries later, King Cheraman Perumal and Queen Cherumdevi visited Chakrapuram. Guided by a divine dream in which Garuda revealed the hidden Sreevallabha idol in the Netravathi River, they recovered the ancient deity and installed it at Thiruvalla. During the consecration, the Lord miraculously seated Himself on the pedestal as divine light and Vedic chants filled the temple, and Sages Durvasa and Vyasa appeared before vanishing into the sacred Jalavanthy pond. In a later age, Vilwamangalam Swamiyar saw the Lord watching a Kathakali performance in the guise of a Brahmin youth, declaring it His favorite pastime. Since then, Kathakali has been offered as a sacred ritual. The temple is also linked to Ghandakarnan, the son of Shiva, who, following his father's guidance and Sage Durvasa's counsel, worshipped Vishnu at Thiruvalla, bathed in the Jalavanthy pond, and attained liberation through the Lord's grace. The place is known as Vallabha Kshethram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sree Vallabha Perumal (Thiruvazhmaarban, Kolapiran)**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Vathsalyavalli (Selvatirukozhundu Nachiyar)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Ghandakarnan Theertham, Pamba River

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Chadhuranga Kola Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Sreedevi Antharjanam, Vilwamangalam Swamiyar, Sage Durvasa's counsel, Ghandakarnan, King Cheraman Perumal and Queen Cherumdevi

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sree Vallabha Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns and Thirumangai Alvar in Eleven hymns.

Lord Sree Vallabha Perumal and Goddess Vathsalyavalli – Thiruvallavazh

# 70 Thirukkadithaanam

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to legend, after crowning Parikshit as king of Hastinapura, the Pandava brothers set out on a pilgrimage. When they reached the banks of the sacred Pamba River, each installed an deity of Lord Krishna as their chosen deity. Yudhishthira consecrated the Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple, Bhima established the Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple, Arjuna the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, Nakula the Thiruvanvandoor Mahavishnu Temple, and Sahadeva the Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple. It is said that Sahadeva himself built this Divya Kshetram, dedicating it to Lord Vishnu for attaining liberation. The temple is also linked to the tale of King Rukmangatha of the Solar dynasty, who performed the Ekadasi vow with great devotion and offered all his accumulated merits to the celestial beings, thereby ascending to heaven. Within the temple precincts are shrines for Lord Krishna and Lord Narasimha. A local legend tells of a temple servant who once delayed opening the temple doors, causing devotees to wait for darshan. Angered by the delay, the deity cursed him to turn into stone. The stone image of this servant still stands at the temple's entrance as a reminder of punctual devotion. Another version is striking legend linked to the temple concerns a proud king of Chembakaserry, a learned Nambuthiri Brahmin ruler who gloried in the prosperity of his realm and its Krishna temple. Seeking to assert his superiority over the rulers of Nanrulainattu, whose capital was Thrikodithanam, he deliberately arrived there after the Seiveli puja, the final ritual of the day, when the temple had already been closed. It is deemed highly inauspicious to reopen the temple after the deity is ritually put to rest, yet the arrogant king bribed a caretaker to unlock the doors for his private darshan. When the local rulers discovered this grave offence, they were outraged. The caretaker was executed for violating sacred protocol, and not long after, the king himself fell ill and died—a sign of divine displeasure. To commemorate this event and to warn others against disturbing the deity after hours, a stone figure was placed at the temple entrance. In some local versions, this act of sacrilege is attributed instead to the king of Ambalapuzha. Thrikodithanam, also known as Thiru Kadithanam, is celebrated as Arputha Narayanan Divya Desam, one of the prominent Kadigai Kshetrams. It is believed that anyone who visits the Arputha Narayana Perumal Temple in Changanachery and stays there for at least one Kadigai (about twenty-four minutes) will be freed from all sins and curses. The saint Nammazhvar extolled the Lord of Thiru Kadithanam as one who ever abides with Goddess Lakshmi on His chest, amidst the sacred groves of celestial Kalpa trees, where the chanting of the Vedas resounds continuously.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Amrutha (Arbhuta) Narayana Perumal**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Karpagavalli**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Bhoomi Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Punyakoti Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sahadeva and King Rukmangatha

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Amrutha Narayana Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns.
- Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple is one of the five ancient temples connected with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.

Lord Sri Amruthanarayana Perumal and Goddess Karpagavalli – Thirukkadithaanam

# 71 Thiruchengundrur (Thrichittatt)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple, also known as Thiru Chittaru of Thiru Chenkundroor, situated in the Chengannur region of Kerala, is one of the five ancient shrines associated with the Pandava princes of the Mahabharata. These sacred temples—collectively known as the Pancha Pandava Temples—were established by the brothers along the banks of the river Pamba during their pilgrimage after crowning Parikshit as king of Hastinapura. Each Pandava enshrined a tutelary deity of Lord Krishna as an expression of devotion and gratitude. Yudhishthira consecrated the Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple, Bhima the Puliyur Temple, Arjuna the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, Nakula the Thiruvanvandoor Temple, and Sahadeva the Thrikodithanam Temple. Among them, Thrichittatt is regarded as the foremost and holds profound spiritual significance. According to legend, during the Kurukshetra War, Yudhishthira—celebrated for his unwavering adherence to truth—was compelled to utter a half-truth to bring about the downfall of his preceptor, Dronacharya. Deeply remorseful for this act, he undertook penance at this very site to atone for the blemish on his virtue. It is believed that even before his arrival, the devas (celestial beings) had worshipped here, and therefore the presiding deity came to be known as Imayavarappar, meaning "the Lord worshipped by the devas." Ancient lore further narrates that this temple was originally established by the devas on the banks of the Chittar River, a tributary of the sacred Pamba, long before human times. In the Dvapara Yuga, Yudhishthira renovated and reconsecrated it, installing the deity now venerated as Thevara Moorthy, an aspect of Lord Vishnu embodying the attributes of Krishna. The deity stands gracefully facing west with four arms—holding the Panchajanya (conch), Sudarshana Chakra (discus), and lotus, while one hand remains in a gesture of blessing rather than bearing the traditional Kaumodaki mace. Before consecration, Yudhishthira is said to have immersed the divine deity in the temple pond and then filled his conch with its sanctified water to perform the first worship. Hence, the temple tank is revered as Amurtha Pushkarani—the "nectar-filled pond"—and also as Shankha Tirtham, the "conch sanctified waters."

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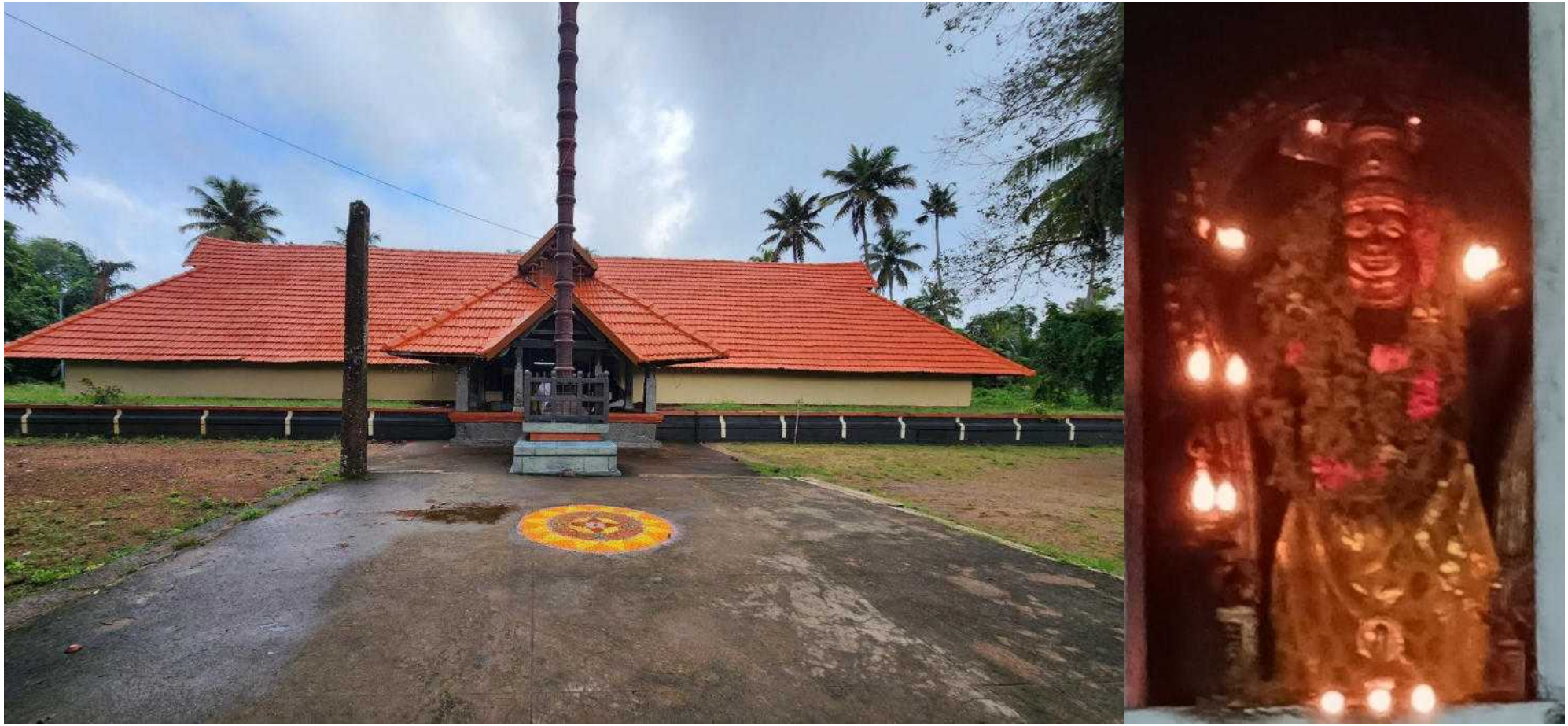
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Devathideva (Imayavarappan) Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Rakthapankajavalli (Sengamalavalli)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chittraaru (River), Amurtha Pushkarani, Shankha Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Jagajyothi Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Maharaj Yudhishthira, Sage Bhirgu, Lord Shiva |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Imayavarappan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns.
- Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple is one of the five ancient temples connected with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.



Lord Sri Devathideva (Imayavarappan) Perumal and Goddess Rakthapankajavalli – Thiruchengundrur (Thrichittatt)

# 72 Thiruppuliyur (Kuttanaadu)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple, located in the Chengannur region of Kerala, is one of the five ancient shrines associated with the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. These five temples—Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple at Chengannur, Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple at Puliyur, Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, Thiruvanvandoor Mahavishnu Temple, and Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple—are believed to have been established by Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva respectively, during their pilgrimage after crowning Parikshit as the king of Hastinapura. According to legend, Puliyur Temple was built and consecrated by Bhima, the second of the Pandava brothers, renowned for his immense strength and devotion. The presiding deity here is Lord Vishnu, worshipped as Mayapiran, along with His consort Porkodi Nachiyar. It is said that Bhima himself performed regular worship of this deity during his pilgrimage along the Pamba River. The temple also holds an ancient connection with the Sapta Rishis—Atri, Vasishta, Kashyapa, Gautama, Bharadvaja, Vishvamitra, and Jamadagni—who are believed to have received divine darshan of Lord Mayapiran here. Through the grace of the Lord and with the aid of Indra, all seven sages ultimately attained moksha (liberation). An episode from the Puranas further sanctifies this temple. Once, King Virukshadharbi, the son of the righteous monarch Shibi Chakravarti, ruled over a land afflicted by drought and famine. Seeking to restore prosperity, he invited the Sapta Rishis to accept his charity, hoping their blessings would bring abundance. However, the sages declined his offerings, perceiving that the misfortunes of the kingdom stemmed from the king's own past actions. Determined to make them accept his gifts, Virukshadharbi deceitfully hid gold inside fruits and presented them to the sages. Realizing his deception through their divine vision, the sages again refused. Enraged, the king performed a sacrificial ritual invoking a fierce pishacha (female demon) named Kiruthyai, commanding her to destroy the sages. Sensing the danger, Lord Vishnu sent Indra to protect them. Indra assuming the form of Tiger slew the demon Kiruthyai, and the Sapta Rishis, now freed from fear, were blessed with the vision of Lord Mayapiran. Tradition holds that Bhima performed penance here before the Mahabharata War, seeking divine strength and grace. The temple's grand structure is said to reflect Bhima's might and largeness of heart. The Gada (mace)—Bhima's divine weapon—is believed to have been preserved in the temple premises, symbolizing his power and devotion.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Maayapiran Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Porkodi Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Prajnasaras (Poonjunai Theertham) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Purushothama (Purushasookta) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Bhima, Sapta Rishis, Lord Indra |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Maayapiran Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns and Thirumangai Alvar in one hymn.
- Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple is one of the five ancient temples connected with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.

Lord Sri Maayapiran Perumal and Goddess Porkodi Nachiyar – Thiruppuliyur (Kuttanaadu)

# 73 Thiruvaranvilai (Aranmula)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, situated on the southern bank of the sacred Pamba River in the Chengannur region of Kerala, is one of the five ancient shrines linked with the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. These five temples—Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple (Yudhishthira), Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple (Bhima), Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple (Arjuna), Thiruvanvandoor Mahavishnu Temple (Nakula), and Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple (Sahadeva)—were consecrated by the brothers during their pilgrimage after crowning King Parikshit in Hastinapura. According to legend, Arjuna built this temple to atone for the sin of killing his elder brother Karna on the battlefield—a deed that violated the warrior's code, as Karna was unarmed at that moment. Arjuna installed here the deity of Lord Krishna as Parthasarathy, the divine charioteer who guided him through the battle of Kurukshetra. Another sacred tradition states that this is the very form of Lord Krishna who, in the heat of battle, broke His own vow for the sake of His devotee. When Bhishma's unstoppable onslaught nearly destroyed Arjuna, Krishna leapt from His chariot, lifted the Sudarshana Chakra, and rushed toward Bhishma in divine fury. Overjoyed at beholding this supreme vision, Bhishma dropped his weapons and surrendered, while Arjuna pleaded with Krishna to spare his grandsire and uphold His word. The deity at Aranmula is believed to represent this powerful moment. The temple's name, Aranmula, is derived from the Malayalam words "Aru" (six) and "Mula" (bamboo). Tradition holds that the deity was brought to this site in a raft made of six bamboo poles, floating down the Pamba River. Another version recounts that it was carried on a raft of seven bamboos, one of which drifted away at a spot two kilometers upstream, now known as Mulavoor Kadavu, meaning "the riverbank where the bamboo pole came off." Some scholars interpret the name as deriving from "Arin-villai", meaning "land beside a river," again emphasizing the temple's close association with the Pamba's sacred waters. The Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple is revered as one of the 108 Divya Desams, the sacred Vishnu temples praised in the Tamil Divya Prabandham. Saint Nammazhvar extols the deity here as Thiru Varan Vilai or Thiru Kuralappan, envisioning the Lord surrounded by verdant groves, sacred gardens, and majestic mansions that rise skyward.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Kuralappan (Parthasarathy or Seshasanar) Perumal**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Padmasani Nachiyar**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Vedavyasa Saras and Pamba Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Vamana Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Arjuna, Lord Brahma and Vedavyasa

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kuralappan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns.
- Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple is one of the five ancient temples connected with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.

Lord Sri Kuralappan (Parthasarathy) Perumal and Goddess Padmasani Nachiyar - Thiruvaranvilai (Aranmula)

# 74 Thiruvanvandoor

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiruvanvandoor (Thiruvamundar) Mahavishnu Temple, located near Chengannur in Kerala, is one of the five ancient shrines associated with the Pandava brothers of the Mahabharata. These five temples—Thrichittatt Mahavishnu Temple (Yudhishthira), Puliyur Mahavishnu Temple (Bhima), Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple (Arjuna), Thiruvanvandoor Mahavishnu Temple (Nakula), and Thrikodithanam Mahavishnu Temple (Sahadeva)—were consecrated along the banks of the sacred Pamba River during their pilgrimage after crowning King Parikshit in Hastinapura. The temple stands close to the holy Pamba River, from which the presiding deity, Paambanaiappan, derives His name—meaning "the Lord associated with the Pamba." According to another legend, the temple was originally consecrated by Sage Bhrigu, one of the revered Sapta Rishis. It was later renovated and worshipped by Nakula, the fourth of the Pandava brothers. Nammazhvar describes the presiding deity as radiant and majestic—bearing the Sudarshana Chakra (discus), Panchajanya (conch), Vel (spear), and Kaumodaki (mace). The Lord is adorned with lotus eyes and coral-red lips, a divine form that captivates the hearts of devotees. In his hymn, Nammazhvar describes Thiruvanvandoor as a flourishing land where paddy fields grow tall and swans play among the lotus ponds. The sounds of conches and Vedic chants fill the air, and the Lord of the Discus and Conch reigns supreme—gracing His devotees with beauty, wealth, and liberation. He hails the deity as "the Wealthy Lord", symbolizing both material prosperity and the boundless riches of spiritual bliss.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Paambanaiyappan Perumal (Kamalanadhan)**
(*Standing posture* - facing West)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Kamalavalli Nachiyar**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Pamba Theertham and Papanasa

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

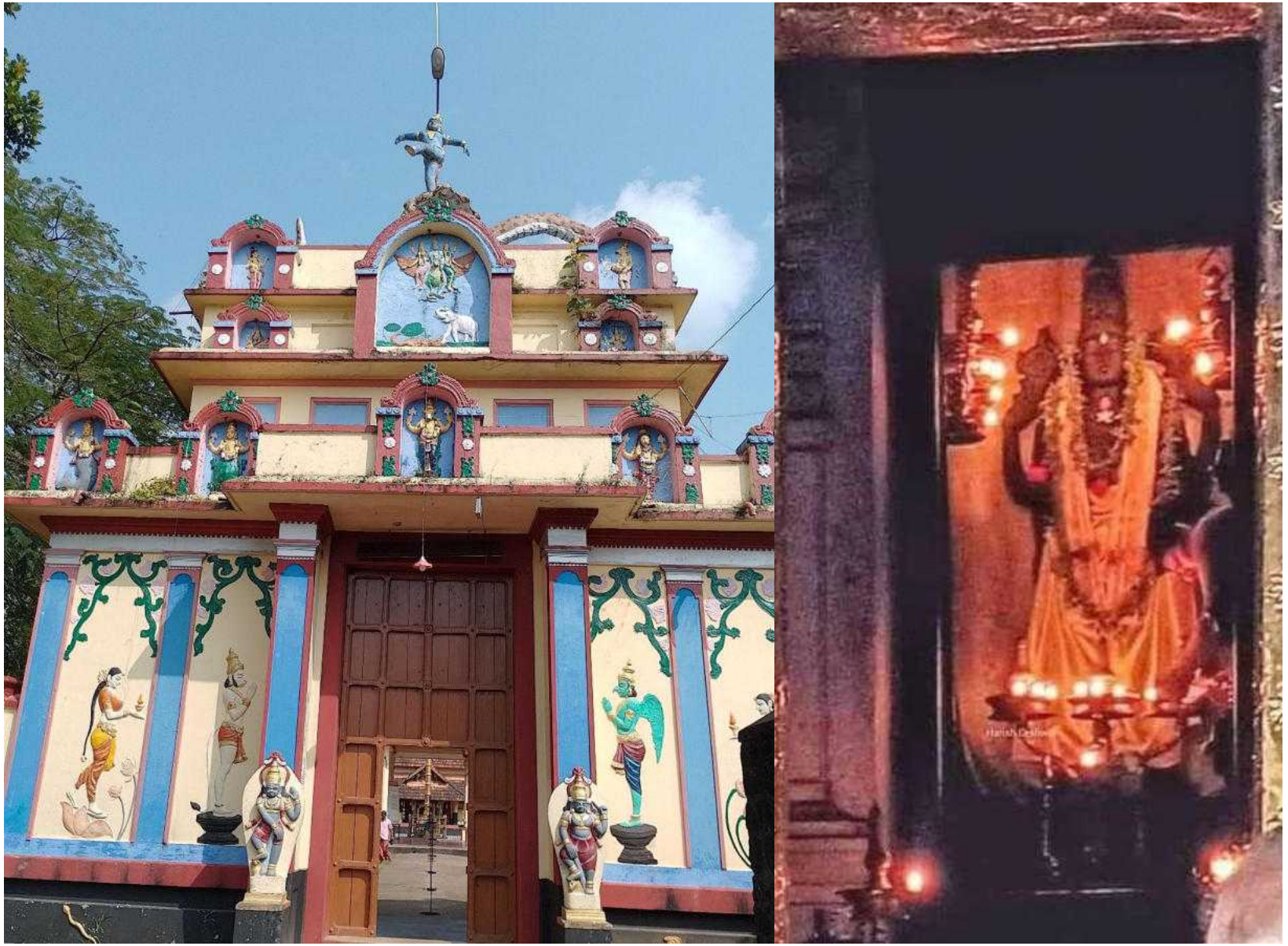
Vedalaya Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Nakula, Sage Bhirgu, Sage Markandeya and Sage Narada

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Paambanaiyappan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns.
- Thiruvanvandoor Mahavishnu Temple is one of the five ancient temples connected with the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.



Lord Sri Paambanaiyappan Perumal and Goddess Kamalavalli Nachiyar – Thiruvanvandoor

# 75 Thiruvananthapuram (Thiruvanandapuram)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram is among the most ancient and sacred shrines of Vishnu worship in India, revered both in scriptures and Tamil devotional literature. The temple's fame extends deep into antiquity, with its glory mentioned in many Puranas including the Vishnu, Brahma, Matsya, Varaha, Skanda, Padma, Vayu, Bhagavata, and even in the Mahabharata. Early Sangam literature also refers to the temple, calling it "The Golden Temple," suggesting its immense wealth even in those times. Classical Tamil poems and later works like those of Nammalwar describe both the temple and the city as radiant with golden walls, portraying them as the very image of heaven on earth. Tradition holds that Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, purified and worshipped the deity in the Dvapara Yuga. He entrusted the temple's administration to seven distinguished Brahmin families and its protection to King Aditya Vikrama of Venad, granting its ritual authority to Tharananallur Namboothiripad. Another legend speaks of the sage Vilvamangalam Swamigal, who prayed for a vision of the Lord. Vishnu appeared to him as a mischievous boy, but when the sage became angry, the child vanished, revealing his divine nature. The sage repented, and upon hearing a heavenly voice, journeyed to Ananthankadu—the endless forest—where he saw the Lord merge into an iluppa tree, which fell and transformed into the colossal reclining form of Vishnu resting upon the serpent Anantha. The deity's manifestation was vast, stretching from Thiruvallam to Thrippadapuram near Thiruvananthapuram. At the sage's request, the Lord assumed a smaller form, the same majestic image now enshrined in the temple. The sage, overcome with devotion, offered rice gruel and salted mango in a coconut shell—an offering that marked the beginning of the temple's worship. With the help of local Brahmin families and the king, a magnificent shrine was later built at the sacred site, where the Ananthankadu Nagaraja Temple still stands today. In the 18th century, Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma ascended the throne of Travancore, consolidating power and restoring the temple to new grandeur. After reconsecrating the deity in 1731 CE, he performed the most defining act in Travancore's history: on January 17, 1750, he surrendered his entire kingdom to Lord Padmanabhaswamy in a ceremony called Thrippadi Danam, declaring that he and his descendants would henceforth rule only as servants of the deity. From then on, every ruler of Travancore bore the title "Sri Padmanabha Dasa," and every royal woman "Sri Padmanabha Sevini." Marthanda Varma's final wish was that no ruler of Travancore should ever deviate from this divine dedication and that all future conquests and possessions should belong to Lord Padmanabhaswamy. Thus, the temple came to embody both the spiritual and temporal heart of Travancore, where the Lord Himself is regarded as the true and eternal sovereign.

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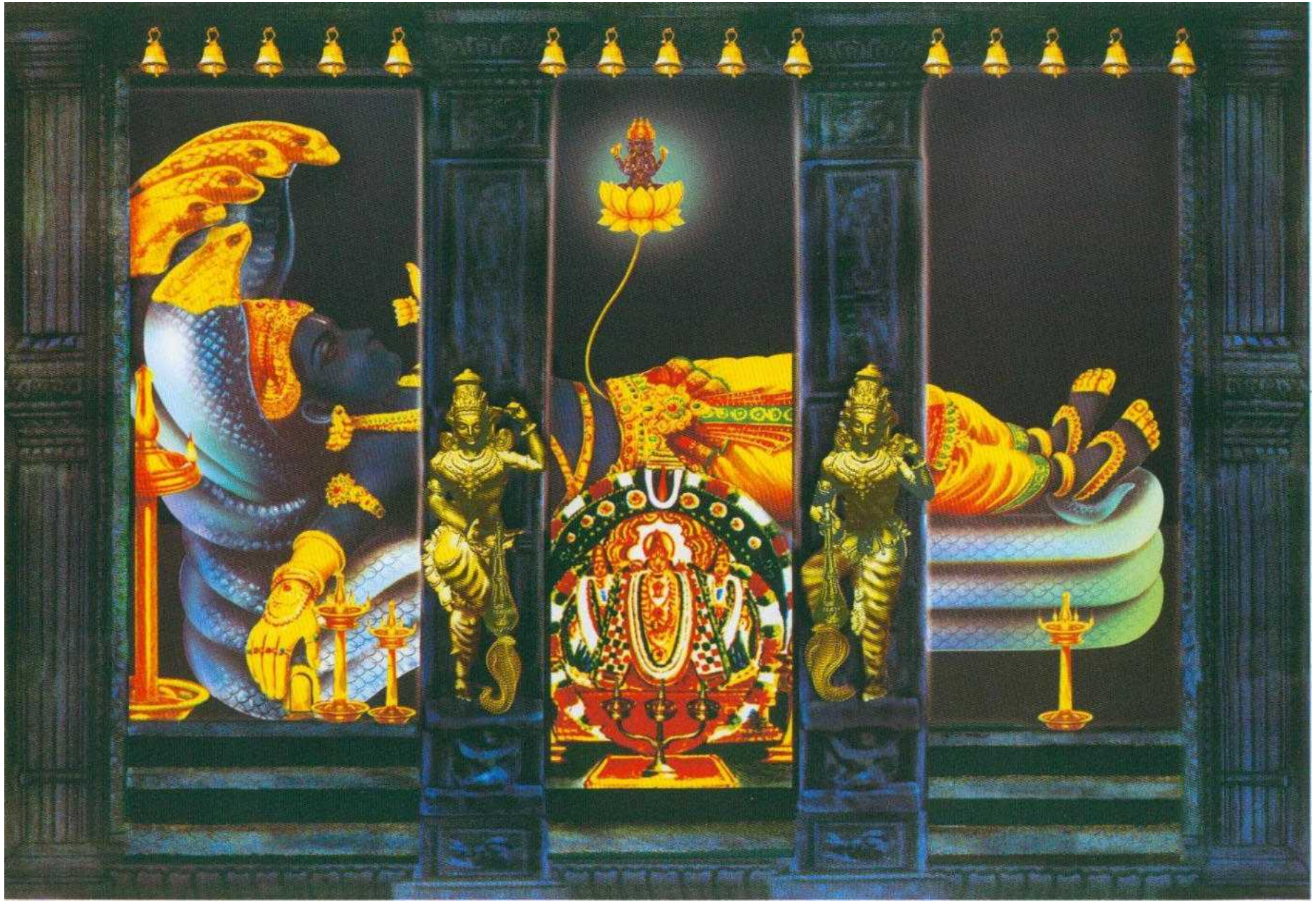
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swami**<br>*(Bhujanga (Anantha) Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Sri Hari Lakshmi Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Mathsya Theertham, Padma Theertham, Varaha Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Hemakoota Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Parasurama, Vilvamangalam Swamigal, Indra, Chandra, Lord Shiva, and Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swami sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns. |



Lord Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swami Perumal and Goddess Hari Lakshmi Nachiyar – Thiruvananthapuram

# 76 Thiruvattaru

**Sthalapuranam:**

The ancient temple of Sri Adi Kesava Perumal at Thiruvattar is among the most sacred shrines of Lord Vishnu in South India. The presiding deity, Sri Adi Kesava Perumal, lies majestically in Bhujanga Sayanam, a reclining posture on Ananta Sesha, facing west. The deity measures twenty-two feet in length and is uniquely composed of 16,008 sacred saligrams. The Lord is viewed through three separate doors, revealing His divine form from head to foot. This temple is historically significant, as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited it in 1510 CE during His South Indian pilgrimage. It was here that He discovered the lost fifth chapter of the Brahma-samhita, which He read at a spot within the temple where devotees still offer homage. Before having darshan of the Lord, Mahaprabhu took a holy dip in the Tamraparni River that flows beside the temple. The structure and sanctity of the temple closely resemble that of the renowned Padmanabhaswamy Temple at Thiruvananthapuram. According to sacred legend, the manifestation of Sri Adi Kesava Perumal is linked to an ancient cosmic event. Once, Lord Brahma performed a yajna without inviting Saraswati Devi, who, angered by the insult, created two fierce asuras named Kesan and Kesi from the sacrificial fire. They began tormenting the worlds, and the gods appealed to Lord Vishnu for deliverance. Vishnu appeared as Adi Kesava and fought Kesan. The Lord hurled the demon onto Mount Mahendragiri, sounded His conch, and summoned Adi Sesha, who bound Kesan tightly in his coils. The Lord then reclined upon Adi Sesha, crushing the asura beneath His weight. When Kesan tried to free himself, the Lord manifested twelve Siva-lingas around him to stand guard. These twelve shrines became the renowned Siva temples of the region. Meanwhile, Kesi, the sister of Kesan, enraged at her brother's fall, took revenge by transforming herself and her companion Kothai into rivers that sought to flood the temple. To protect His abode, Bhumi Devi elevated the temple to its current height—about fifty-five feet above the surrounding land. The temple's elevation and the slope leading up to it still bear witness to this miracle. The two rivers ultimately merged with the Arabian Sea at a place called Moovaatru Mukham. Repenting for their act, they were forgiven and sanctified when the Lord Himself took a dip in their waters. In 1740 CE, men of the Nawab of Arcot plundered the temple and carried away the golden utsava-murti. The deity was stored carelessly in a warehouse with refuse, but each morning the deity miraculously rose to the top, no matter how heavily it was weighed down. Alarmed, the Nawab ordered it chained down. Soon after, his wife was struck by a painful and incurable illness. That night, the temple priest, known as Azhathi, received a vision in which the Lord commanded him to tell the Nawab that his wife's health would be restored if the stolen deity was returned. The priest conveyed the message, and upon the deity's return, the Nawab's wife was instantly cured. Deeply repentant, the Nawab offered gifts—a crown, a golden plate, a cup, and a pillow—to the Lord. He also instituted a special ritual known as Thiru Allah Puja, endowing funds for its annual observance. The cap used in this worship is designed like a Muslim headpiece in remembrance of the Nawab's surrender. This sacred offering continues to this day.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Adhikesava Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing West)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Maragadhavalli (Padminidevi) Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Vattaru (River Kothai, River Pahrali and River Thamirabarani), Kadalvai Theertham and Rama Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ashtanga (Ashtakshra) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Brahma, Saraswati Devi, Bhumi Devi, Sage Parashurama, and Chandra |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Adhikesava Perumal sung by Nammalvar in Eleven hymns. |

Lord Sri Adhikesava Perumal and Goddess Maragadhavalli – Thiruvattaru

# 77 Thiruvanparisaram (Thirupathisaram)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiruvazhmarban Temple at Thiruppathisaram is one of the prominent Vishnu temples in Nagercoil and is also counted among the Divyadesams of Malai Nadu. According to ancient legend, the seven sages known as the Saptarishis performed intense worship to Lord Vishnu at this sacred site, and the Lord, pleased with their devotion, appeared before them in His divine form. It is also believed that after slaying the demon Hiranyakasipu to protect His devotee Prahlada, Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha could not subdue His fury. To pacify Him, Goddess Mahalakshmi embraced Him, while Prahlada prayed with folded hands. At that moment, the Lord granted Mahalakshmi a permanent place on His chest, and thus He became known as Thiruvazhmarban—"Thiru" signifying Mahalakshmi, "vazh" meaning resides, and "marban" referring to the chest. This is why the presiding deity of this temple uniquely bears Mahalakshmi on His chest, and there is no separate sanctum for the Goddess. Thiruvazhmarban is considered equivalent in sanctity to Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati, and hence, it is believed that those unable to visit Tirupati may offer their worship here to receive the same divine grace. In the ardha mandapam of the temple are shrines dedicated to Lord Rama with Sita and Lakshmana, along with Vibhishana and Hanuman. According to legend, when Vibhishana was returning to Lanka after attending Lord Rama's coronation, he stopped at this place to worship Lord Thiruvazhmarban and expressed his longing to witness once more the divine scene of the coronation. The compassionate Lord granted him this wish by appearing in the form of Lord Rama in His Pattabhisheka form, blessing the devoted Vibhishana. Another legend connects this temple with King Kulasekara, who later became revered as Kulashekhara Alvar. During one of his victorious campaigns, his horse strayed and was found grazing peacefully near the sacred Soma Tirtham, the temple tank. The king bathed in its waters, felt spiritually uplifted, and worshipped Lord Vishnu at the nearby temple. Inspired by divine grace, he renovated the shrine and named the place Thiruvanparisaram—"Thiru" denoting sacredness, "pari" referring to a horse, and "marban" symbolizing the Lord's heart filled with compassion. The place is also celebrated as the birthplace of Nammalvar, one of the twelve revered Alwar saints of the Vaishnava tradition. It is said that Lord Thiruvazhmarban appeared here not only to the Saptarishis but also to Udayanangai, the blessed mother of Nammalvar, making this sacred site a luminous center of divine revelation and saintly devotion.

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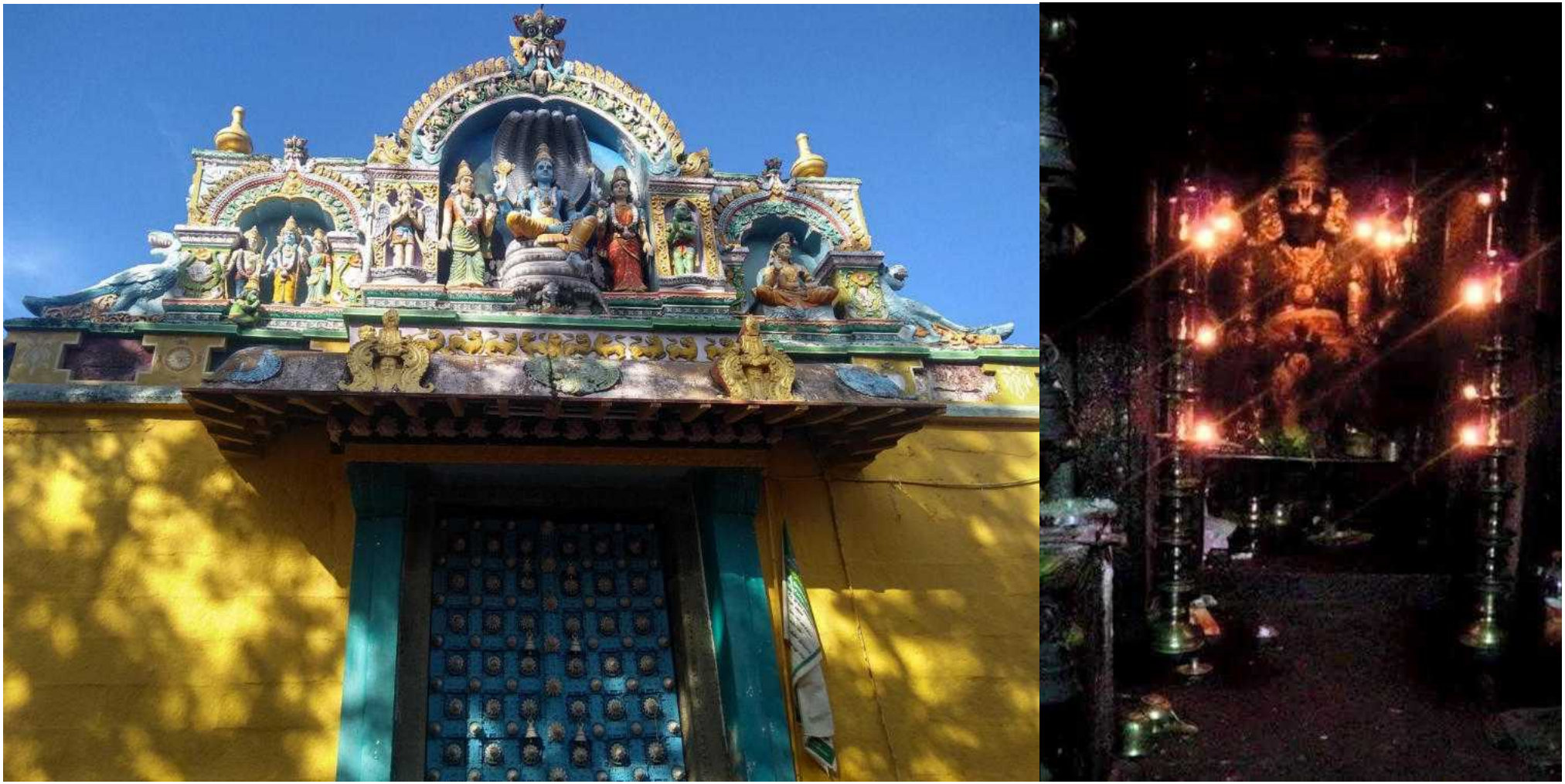
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Thiruvaazhmaarban (Thirukurallappan) Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kamalavalli Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Lakshmi Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Indra Kalyana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Garuda, Kari, Saptarishis, Udayanangai, Vibhishana and Kulashekhara Alvar |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Thiruvaazhmaarban Perumal sung by Nammalvar in one hymn. |



Lord Sri Thiruvaazhmaarban Perumal and Goddess Kamalavalli Nachiyar - Thiruvanparisaram

# 78 Thirukkurungudi

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to the Varaha Purana, the sacred town of Thirukurungudi in Tamil Nadu is believed to be the abode chosen by Lord Varaha, an incarnation of Vishnu. The Purana narrates that Lord Varaha, along with His consort Varahi, desired to remain at this place in a small, endearing form, which gave rise to the name Thirukurungudi—literally meaning "the small abode" or "the short house of the Lord." A deeply moving legend associated with this shrine is that of Nambaduvan, a humble peasant and minstrel (locally called panan) from a lower section of society. Though he was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu, his humility and social standing made him refrain from entering the temple. He would instead offer his heartfelt songs of devotion from outside its gates. One day, while on his way to worship, he was confronted by a fierce asura who demanded his life. Nambaduvan pleaded for permission to complete his prayers first and solemnly promised to return afterward to offer himself. The asura agreed. Nambaduvan then went to the temple and sang his soul-stirring hymns before the Lord. Deeply moved by his devotion, Lord Nambi, the presiding deity, appeared before him outside the sanctum. On his way back, the Lord appeared once more, disguised as a Brahmin, urging Nambaduvan to break his promise and flee. Yet, the devoted minstrel stood firm—his word was sacred to him, and he chose truth over life. When he returned to the asura, his sincerity and music transformed the demon's heart. The asura revealed that he was, in fact, a Brahmin cursed in his previous birth for neglecting his penance. Listening to Nambaduvan's divine songs liberated him from the curse, restoring his celestial form. In Tamil, the word Nambi signifies the embodiment of all virtuous, noble, and graceful qualities. The Thirukurungudi Kshetram is unique in housing five sacred manifestations of the Lord, collectively known as the Panch Nambis: Ninra Nambi (the Standing Lord), Irundha Nambi (the Seated Lord), Kidandha Nambi (the Reclining Lord), Thiruparkadal Nambi, located near the Nambiyaru River, Thirumalai Nambi, situated atop the Mahendragiri hills. It is believed that Thirumangai Azhvar, the great Vaishnava saint who built the monumental walls of Srirangam, once prayed to Lord Ranganatha for liberation. The Lord directed him to His "Southern abode"—Thirukurungudi. Obeying the divine command, Thirumangai Azhvar came here, spent his final days in devotion, and ultimately attained moksha at this sacred site. It is also believed that in response to the prayers of a childless couple, the Lord was later born as Nammazhvar. During his visit to the Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Sri Ramanuja sought to introduce certain reforms in the temple's mode of worship. At the request of the priests, the Lord commanded Garuda to carry the Acharya swiftly to Thirukurungudi. In a miraculous instant, Ramanuja was transported to the summit of the Thirukurungudi rock. From there, he proceeded to the temple, where he personally imparted the sacred Ashtakshara Mantra to the presiding deity. From that divine moment, the Lord came to be known as Vaishnava Nambi. Since Garuda was sent on this celestial mission, tradition holds that no Garuda deity is installed at the Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Temple.

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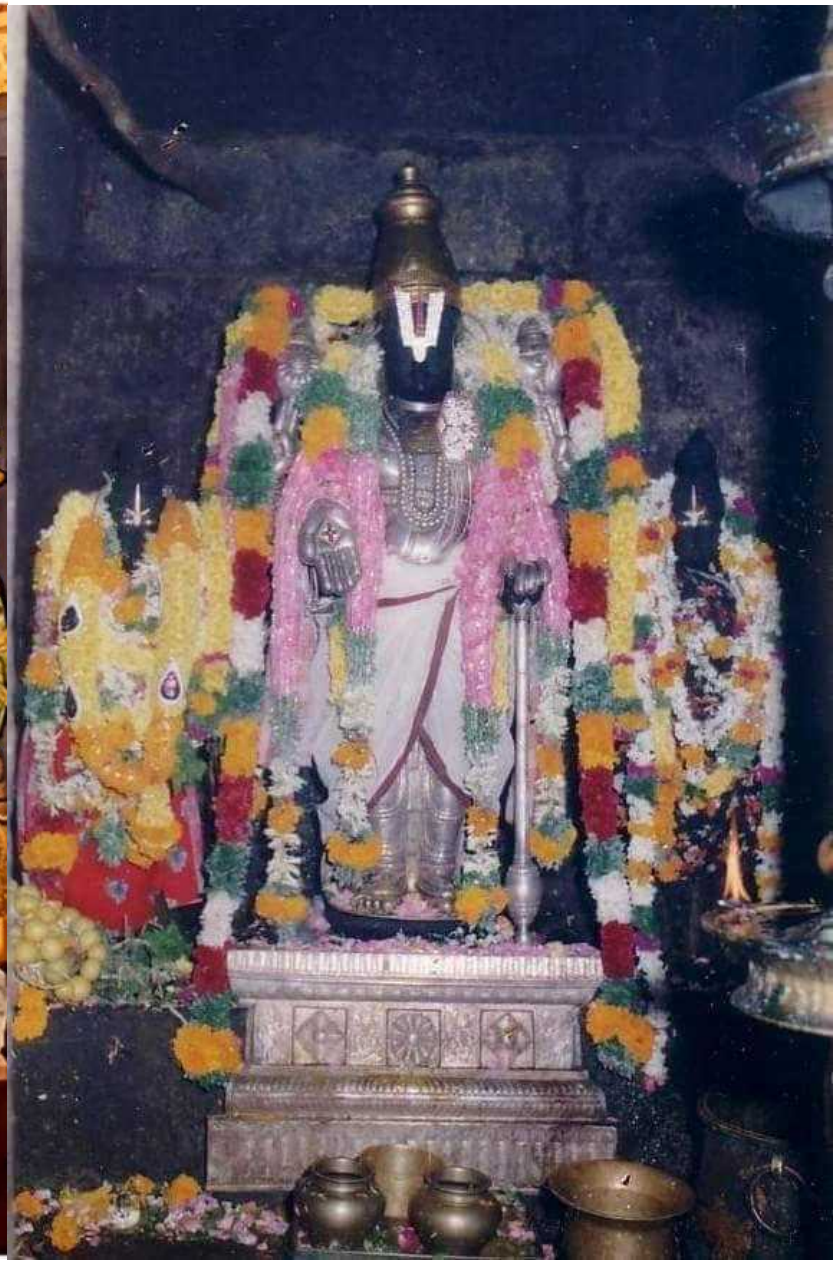
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vaishnava Nambi Perumal (Nindra Nambi, Kurungudi Nambi)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Thirukurungudivalli Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sundara Paripoornar (Vadivazhagiya Nambi) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Thiruppaarkkadal Theertham, Pancha Thurai, Sindhunadi, Nambi River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Panchakethaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Nambaduvan, Sri Ramanuja, Thirumangai Azhvar, Lord Shiva |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vaishnava Nambi Perumal sung by Nammalvar in thirteen hymns, Periya Alvar in one hymn, Thirumangai Alvar in twenty-five hymns and Thirumalisai Alvar in one hymn.



Lord Sri Vaishnava Nambi Perumal and Goddess Thirukurungudivalli Nachiyar - Thirukkurungudi

# 79 Thirucheeravaramangai (Vanamamalai)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The sacred temple of Varagunamangai, also known as Thothadri or Nanguneri, is one of the most revered Divya Desams in Tamil Nadu. The details of its presiding deity and sanctity are mentioned in several ancient scriptures, including the Brahmanda Purana, Skanda Purana, and Narasimha Purana. According to these texts, Sage Narada once received from Lord Shiva a narration about the divine features and sacredness of Thothadri and Vargunamangai, establishing its great spiritual importance. As per legend, Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, is believed to have taken birth here as Srivaramangai—meaning "the noble lady." Hence, the place came to be known as Varangunamangai. Another legend narrates that Adisesha, the celestial serpent upon whom Lord Vishnu reclines, performed intense penance here to earn the Lord's grace, longing to serve as His divine couch. Pleased by his devotion, Lord Vishnu appeared and granted the wish, choosing to rest upon Adisesha. Similarly, Garuda, the eagle mount of Vishnu, also performed penance here and was blessed with the honour of guarding the entrance to Vaikuntha, the eternal abode of the Lord. This holy site is also the birthplace of the great Sri Vaishnava Acharya Manavala Mamunigal, who is revered as an incarnation of Sri Ramanuja, the foremost teacher of the Vishishtadvaita philosophy. Varangunamangai is one of the eight Swayam Vyakta Kshetras—self-manifested abodes of Lord Vishnu—where the deity is believed to have appeared of His own accord. The other seven are Srirangam, Srimushnam, Tirupati, Saligramam, Naimisaranyam, Pushkaram, and Badrinath. Another legend describes how Goddess Earth (Bhudevi) became impure when the blood and bones of the slain asuras Madhu and Kaitabha fell upon her after being destroyed by Lord Vishnu. Seeking purification, she performed penance at Thothadri near the Mahendra Hills. Moved by her devotion, the Lord appeared before her and sanctified her by sprinkling nectar upon her. At her request, He remained seated under the Vaikuntha Vimanam, blessing all who come to Him for darshan. Two celestial maidens, Urvashi and Tilottama, also performed penance at Thothadri, desiring liberation from the cycle of rebirth. When Lord Narayana appeared before them, He asked why such beautiful beings were undertaking severe austerities instead of enjoying celestial pleasures. The two replied that they had realized the highest joy lies not in worldly delight but in eternal service to Him. Pleased with their devotion, the Lord granted them a place beside Him in the sanctum, where they are depicted fanning the Lord with white chamaras (yak-tail fans), forever keeping Him cool in divine serenity. King Kaarya, who was childless, prayed to Lord Nambi at Thirukurungudi. The Lord instructed him to worship the deity buried beneath the earth at Nanguneri. When the king dug at the spot, blood miraculously oozed from the Lord's head. The Lord then directed him to perform an oil abhishekam and pour the used oil into a nearby open well. After doing so, the king was blessed with children and later built the temple at Nanguneri.

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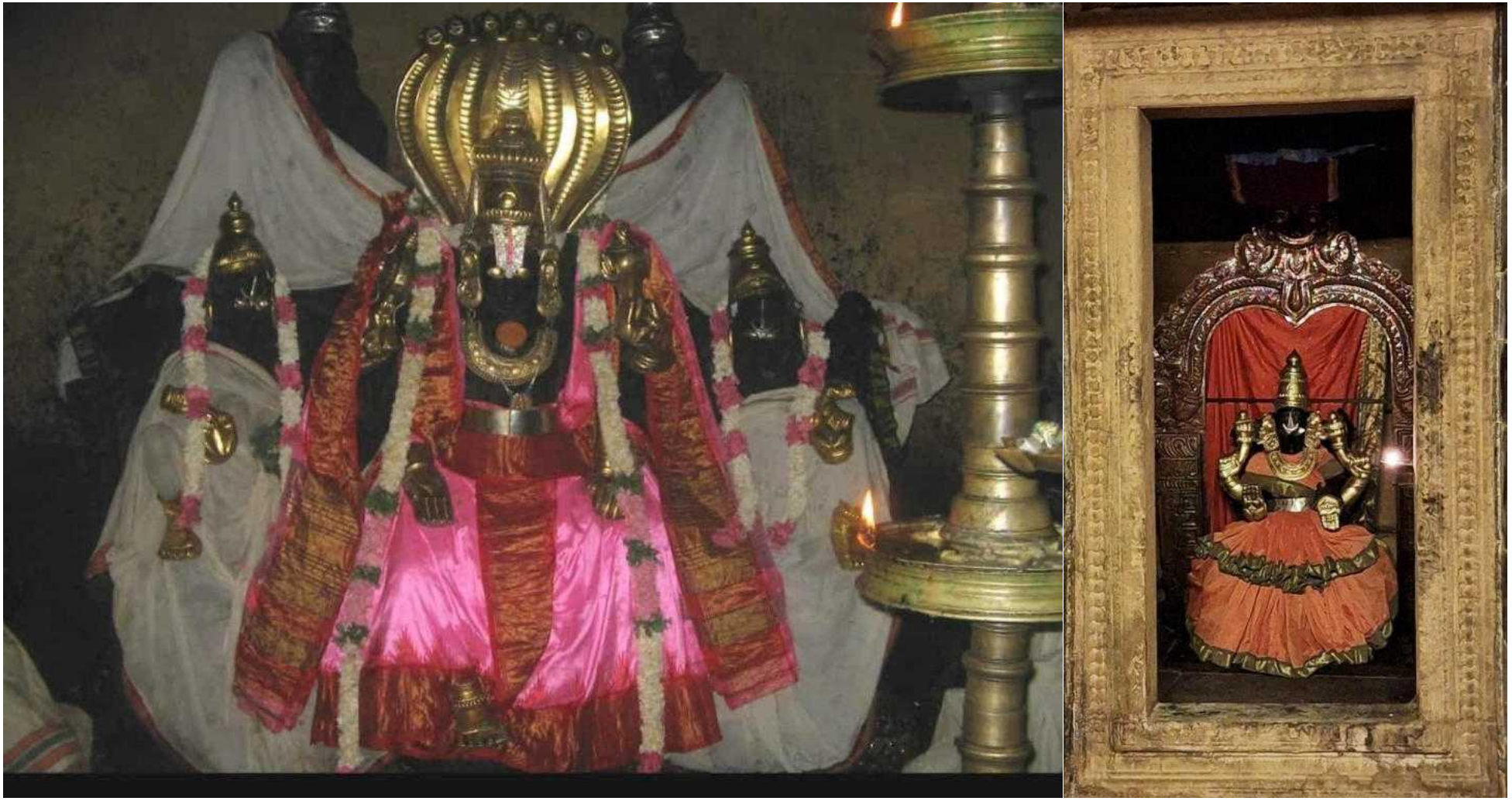
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Thothadhrinatha Perumal (Vanamamalai)**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Sireevaramangaivalli (Ubhaya Nachiyar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Deivanayakan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Indra Theertham and Setrutthamarai Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Nandavarthana (Padmakara) Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Garuda, Adisesha, Goddess Earth (Bhudevi), Urvashi, Tilottama, Sage Narada, Lord Shiva, King Kaarya, Lord Brahma, Lord Indra, Sage Romasa, Sage Bhirgu and Sage Markandeya. |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Thothadhrinatha Perumal sung by Nammalvar in eleven hymns. |



Lord Sri Thothadhrinatha Perumal and Goddess Chireevaramangaivalli - Thirucheeravaramangai (Vanamamalai)

# 80 Thiruvaikundam (Srivaikuntam)

**Sthalapuranam:**

As per legend, it is said that the asura Somukasura once attacks Lord Brahma, the creator, and stole from him the four Vedas, the repositories of sacred knowledge. Overcome with grief, Brahma performed severe penance on the banks of the Tamiraparani River, praying to Lord Vishnu in His supreme form as Vaikunthanatha. Pleased with Brahma's devotion, Vishnu appeared before him and promised to restore the Vedas. Taking the form of a divine fish, the Matsya Avatar, He plunged into the cosmic ocean, destroyed Somukasura, and returned the Vedas to Brahma. As a mark of that divine act, the Lord manifested Himself at this very place and chose to reside here eternally as Vaikunthanatha of Srivaikuntam. In the course of time, the sacred deity of the Lord lay buried under the earth and was forgotten for ages. One day, a cow belonging to the royal herd began to pour its milk daily over a particular spot while grazing. When the king noticed that the cow was not yielding milk for the herdsman, he suspected deceit and ordered his men to observe. They discovered that the cow was offering its milk over the same spot each day. The king, realizing it to be a divine sign, ordered the place to be excavated, whereupon the buried deity of Lord Vaikunthanathar was revealed. Filled with awe and devotion, the king reinstalled the deity and expanded the temple. Because the divine revelation occurred through the cow's offering of milk—"pāl" in Tamil—the Lord came to be known as Pal Pandian, the deity revealed through milk. Another legend speaks of a robber chieftain named Kaladushana, who terrorized the region during the Pandya reign. Despite many attempts, the king could not capture him. One day, when his men were taken prisoner, Kaladushana prayed to Lord Vaikunthanathar for refuge. The merciful Lord, moved by his devotion, appeared before the king in the guise of Kaladushana and surrendered. Later, He appeared in the king's dream, revealing His divine act and teaching that wealth gained through unrighteous means would never remain with its possessor but would be redistributed by divine will. Enlightened by the vision, the king released the robber and his men. Because the Lord had appeared in the form of a thief—"kallan" in Tamil—He was thereafter known as Kallapiran, the compassionate deity who redeems even the fallen. Another version of this story tells that Kaladushana, though a thief, offered half of his loot to the Lord. When he was once caught stealing in the royal palace, he meditated deeply on Vaikunthanathar, who entered his body, revealed divine wisdom to the king, and finally manifested His true form before both the king and the penitent thief. From that day, the Lord was worshipped as Kallappiran Perumal, the ever-gracious one who bestows knowledge and salvation even upon sinners.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vaikuntanatha Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Bhoonayagi and Vaikundavalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Kallapiran |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Bhirgu Theertham, Tamrabarani River, Kalasa Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Chandra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Brahma, Kaladushana, Pandian King, Sage Bhirgu, Indra |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vaikuntanatha Perumal sung by Nammalvar in two hymns.
- The sacredness of Srivaikuntam is celebrated in the Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen great Puranas, in a section called the Navathirupathi Mahatmya, which begins with the glory of this temple.

Lord Sri Vaikuntanatha Perumal, Goddess Bhoonayagi and Goddess Vaikundavalli – Thiruvaigundam

# 81 Thiruvaragunamangai (Natham)

**Sthalapuranam:**

As per legend, it is believed that Lord Vishnu manifested at this sacred temple in answer to the prayers of Sage Romesa, who had performed intense penance for thousands of years, seeking the Lord's divine vision. Moved by his unwavering devotion and austerities, Vishnu appeared before the sage and granted him darshan at this very place, sanctifying it for all time. Another legend tells of Sage Vedavit, who lived along the banks of the holy Tamiraparani River. A devoted son, he spent his early years serving his aged parents with deep reverence. After their passing, he renounced worldly life and resolved to undertake penance to attain divine realization. One day, Lord Vishnu appeared before him in the guise of a Brahmin and instructed him to perform his penance at Varagunamangai, the sacred abode of divine grace. Obeying the Lord's words, Vedavit performed long and steadfast austerities there. Pleased by his devotion, Vishnu revealed Himself in all glory, and when the sage prayed that the Lord should remain eternally at that site as Vijayaasana, Vishnu graciously consented, thus establishing His divine presence at Varagunamangai.

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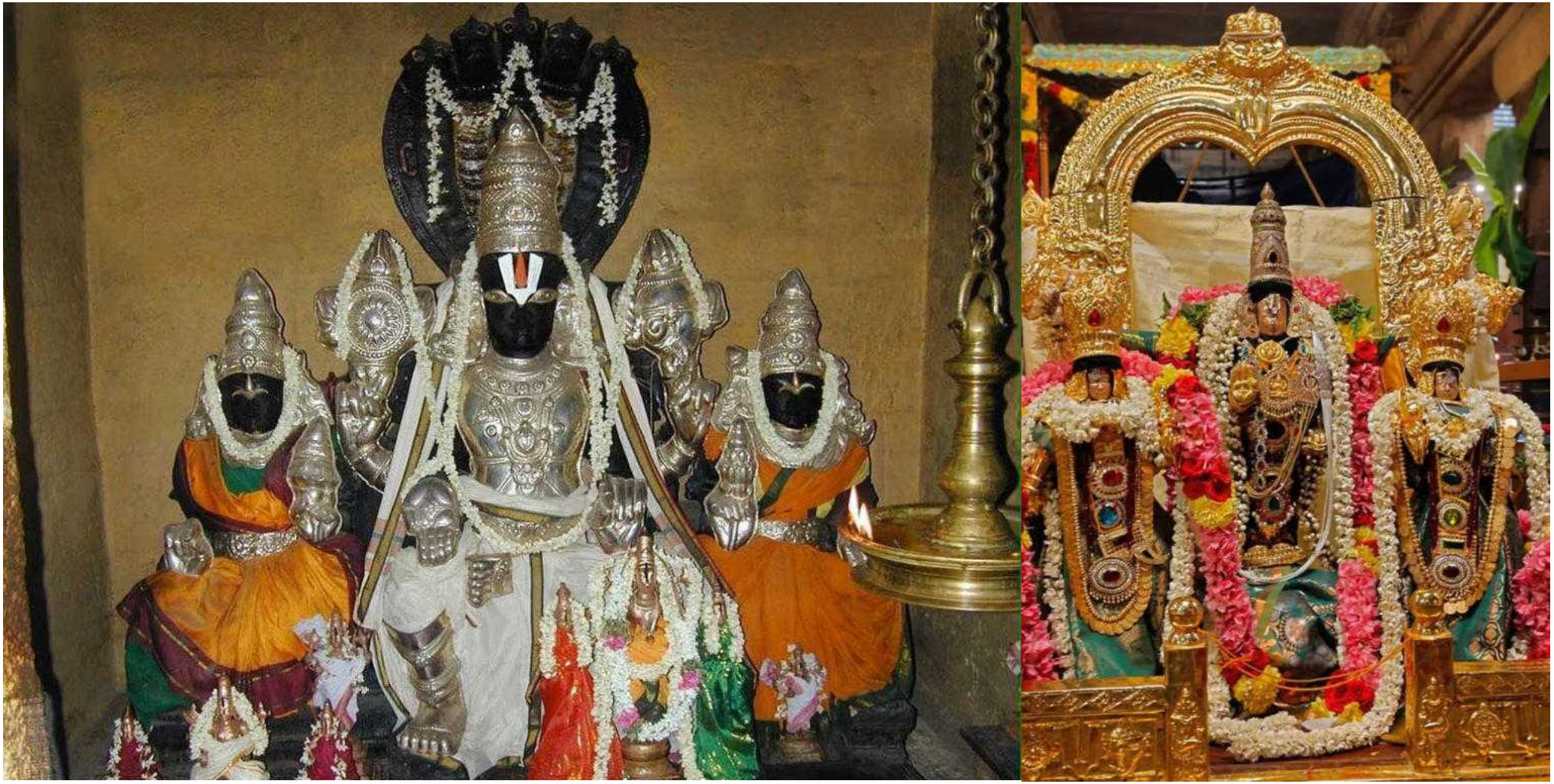
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vijayaasana Perumal (Paramapada Nathan)**<br>(*Sitting posture on Adisesha* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Varagunavalli (Varagunamangai)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Emmidharkadivan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Tamiraparani River, Agni Theertham, Aganasa Theertham, Deva Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Vijayakoti Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Romesa, Sage Vedavit, Agni, Sathyavan |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vijayaasana Perumal sung by Nammalvar in one hymn.
- The greatness of this temple and its legends find mention in ancient scriptures. The Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen major Puranas composed by Sage Vyasa, includes a chapter called the Navathirupathi Mahatmya, which celebrates the sanctity of the nine sacred Vishnu shrines on the banks of the Tamiraparani River. Another revered text, the Vaikunta Mahatmya, written in Sanskrit and forming part of the Tamraparani Sthalapurana, also glorifies the divine presence of the Lord here.



Lord Sri Vijayasana Perumal and Goddess Varagunavalli – Thiruvaragunamangai (Natham)

# 82 Thiruppuliangudi

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to the temple's ancient legend, Lord Vishnu once chose to reside at this sacred place during one of His visits to the earth. At that time, His consort Bhudevi, the Earth Goddess, felt deeply hurt because, despite His presence on her domain, the Lord did not visit her and instead spent His time with Sridevi. Overcome by sorrow and anger, Bhudevi withdrew her divine presence from the earth and descended into the netherworld. As a result, the vitality of the earth began to fade—plants withered, rivers dried up, and all living beings suffered in distress. Alarmed by this calamity, the devas approached Vishnu and prayed for deliverance. Hearing their plea, the compassionate Lord descended to the netherworld with Sridevi to console Bhudevi. Appearing before her with divine grace, He pacified her and assured her of His boundless affection. Moved by His love and concern, Bhudevi agreed to return to her rightful place, and with her return, fertility and prosperity were restored to the earth. For having saved the world and protected all beings, Vishnu came to be worshipped here as Bhumipalar—the Guardian of the Earth. The presiding deity is enshrined in the sacred posture of Bhujanga Sayanam, reclining gracefully on the divine serpent Adisesha. From His navel arises the stalk of a lotus that extends upward to the temple wall, where Lord Brahma is depicted seated upon the blossomed flower. Through a small side window, devotees can behold the Lord's holy feet, a vision believed to bestow immense spiritual merit. The temple is also sanctified by several other legends. A Brahmin named Yagna Sharma, once cursed by one of Sage Vasishta's sons to assume the form of a demon, was redeemed upon touching the divine feet of the Lord here, regaining his original form through the Lord's mercy. It is also said that Indra, the king of the devas, was relieved from the terrible sin of Brahma-hatya dosha—the curse incurred by slaying a Brahmin—after worshipping the Lord at this holy place.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Kaaisinavendhar Perumal (Bhumipalar, Kaaychina Vendan)**
*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)*

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Malarmagal Nachiyar** and **Goddess Poomagal Nachiyar**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Varuna Theertham, Indra Theertham, Nirruthi Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Vedasara Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Goddess Bhudevi, Brahmin Yajna Sharma, Indra, Varuna, Nirruthi, Sage Nara, Dharmaraja

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kaaisinavendhar (Bhumipalar) Perumal sung by Nammalvar in twelve hymns.
- The greatness of this temple and its legends find mention in ancient scriptures. The Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen major Puranas composed by Sage Vyasa, includes a chapter called the Navathirupathi Mahatmya, which celebrates the sanctity of the nine sacred Vishnu shrines on the banks of the Tamiraparani River. Another revered text, the Vaikunta Mahatmya, written in Sanskrit and forming part of the Tamraparani Sthalapurana, also glorifies the divine presence of the Lord here.

Lord Sri Kaaisinavendhar (Bhumipalar) Perumal, Goddess Malarmagal Nachiyar and Goddess Poomagal Nachiyar – Thiruppuliangudi

# 83 Thirutholaivillimangalam (Irattai Tirupati)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The sacred Irattai Tirupati Temples, comprising the Devapiran and Aravindalochanar shrines, stand as twin sanctuaries among the revered Nava Tirupati Divya Desams along the banks of the holy Tamiraparani River. Both temples are dedicated to Lord Vishnu and are celebrated in the ancient Brahmanda Purana and Padma Purana, where they are collectively referred to as Kedara Nilaya. According to the principal legend, a sage named Suprabha, desiring to perform severe penance, came to this sacred region in search of land suitable for his austerities. As he ploughed the ground, his plough uncovered a bow (vil) and a balance (tola). To his astonishment, the bow and balance instantly transformed into a human couple. The divine voice then revealed that the couple had once insulted Kubera, the Lord of Wealth, and were cursed by him to exist in those forms. Now, released from their curse by the merit of Suprabha's penance, they regained their human nature. Since the bow (vil) and balance (tola) returned to their original forms at this very spot, the place came to be known as Tolavillimangalam—the sacred land of the bow and balance. Sage Suprabha continued his penance with great devotion, offering sacred oblations to the gods. At the end of his austerities, the devas themselves appeared to receive their share of the offerings (Havibhaga). Lord Vishnu, pleased with the sage's devotion and the presence of the devas, manifested before him as Devapiran, "the Lord of the Devas." The Lord, radiant with divine effulgence, blessed the sage and agreed to remain eternally at that spot to bestow grace upon devotees. As the sage later walked along the riverbank, he came across a pond filled with blooming lotuses, where again he beheld the Lord following him. Overwhelmed by devotion, the sage prayed that Vishnu might stay there also, resplendent amidst the lotuses. The Lord granted his wish and revealed Himself as Aravindalochanar—the One whose eyes are like the lotus and who dwells amid the flowers of purity and grace. Another divine episode connects the site with the celestial Ashwini twins, the physicians of the gods. Desiring a share of the sacrificial offerings made by humans, they prayed first to Brahma, who directed them to perform penance at Tolavillimangalam. Following his counsel, the Ashwins undertook deep austerities here and bathed in the sacred tank, which thereafter came to be known as Ashvini Tirtha. Pleased by their devotion, Lord Vishnu appeared before them holding lotus flowers and granted them their cherished wish, allowing them a share in the divine offerings. A further legend speaks of Somuka, a powerful asura who once defeated Brahma and stole the four Vedas from him, throwing creation into disorder. Distressed, Brahma performed penance on the banks of the Tamiraparani River, invoking Vishnu in His form as Devapiran. The merciful Lord appeared before him, assured him of protection, and took a divine form of Matsya to destroy the asura Somuka. After recovering the sacred Vedas, Vishnu returned them to Brahma, restoring cosmic order. Having blessed the creator, the Lord chose to reside eternally in this sacred region, later manifesting again at Srivaikuntam as Vaikunthanatha.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Aravinda Lochana Perumal and Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal** (*Sitting posture* and *Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Karunthadangkanni Nachiyar and Goddess Ubaya Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Senthaamarai Kannan and Sri Devarpiran |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Varuna Theertham, Ashwini Theertham, Thamaraparani River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kumuda Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Suprabha, Lord Brahma, Ashwini Devatas, Indra, Vayu, Varuna |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Aravinda Lochana Perumal and Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal sung by Nammalvar in eleven hymns.
- Irattai Tirupati temples — comprising the shrines of Devapiran and Aravindalochanar — are together revered as a single Divyadesam.

Lord Sri Aravinda Lochana Perumal and Goddess Karunthadangkanni Nachiyar - Lord Sri Srinivasa Perumal and Goddess Ubaya Nachiyar - Thirutholaivillimangalam (Irattai Tirupati)

# 84 Thirukkulandai (Perunkulam)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The sacred Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple, also known as the Sri Mayakoothan Perumal Temple, is one of the illustrious Nava Tirupati Divya Desams situated along the banks of the Tamiraparani River. According to the temple's ancient legend, there once lived a devout couple named Vedasaran and Kumudhavalli, both ardent worshippers of Vishnu. One day, a powerful asura named Amsarajan, driven by arrogance, abducted Kumudhavalli and attempted to display his magical prowess before her. Hearing the cries of His devotee, Lord Vishnu manifested in a wondrous form and challenged the demon to a battle of illusions (Maya Yuddham). The Lord triumphed effortlessly, subduing the asura by dancing upon his head in divine splendour, thereby earning the name Mayakoothan—"He who danced the cosmic dance of victory over illusion." After vanquishing the asura, the Lord graciously restored Kumudhavalli to her husband, reaffirming His eternal vow to protect those who surrender to Him with unwavering faith. Another local legend tells of a childless couple, Devasaran and Kumudhavalli, who lived in a forest named Thadakavanam near Tolavillimangalam. Moved by their pure devotion, Vishnu blessed them with a daughter, Kamaladevi. The child, growing up in the atmosphere of devotion, developed a deep longing to unite with the Lord Himself. Despite persuasion from elders, her heart remained steadfast in her desire to attain Vishnu as her eternal consort. She performed penance with unshaken faith in a grove known as Palikavanam. Because of the penance of this young girl, the place came to be revered as Thirukulanthai. The Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen great scriptures composed by Sage Vyasa, contains a section called Navathirupathi Mahatmeeyam that praises the divine glory of these sacred shrines. Another ancient Sanskrit text, the Vaikunta Mahatmeeyam, part of the Tamraparani Sthalapurana preserved in palm-leaf manuscripts, also extols the holiness of this temple, where Lord Mayakoothan continues to bless devotees with His eternal grace.

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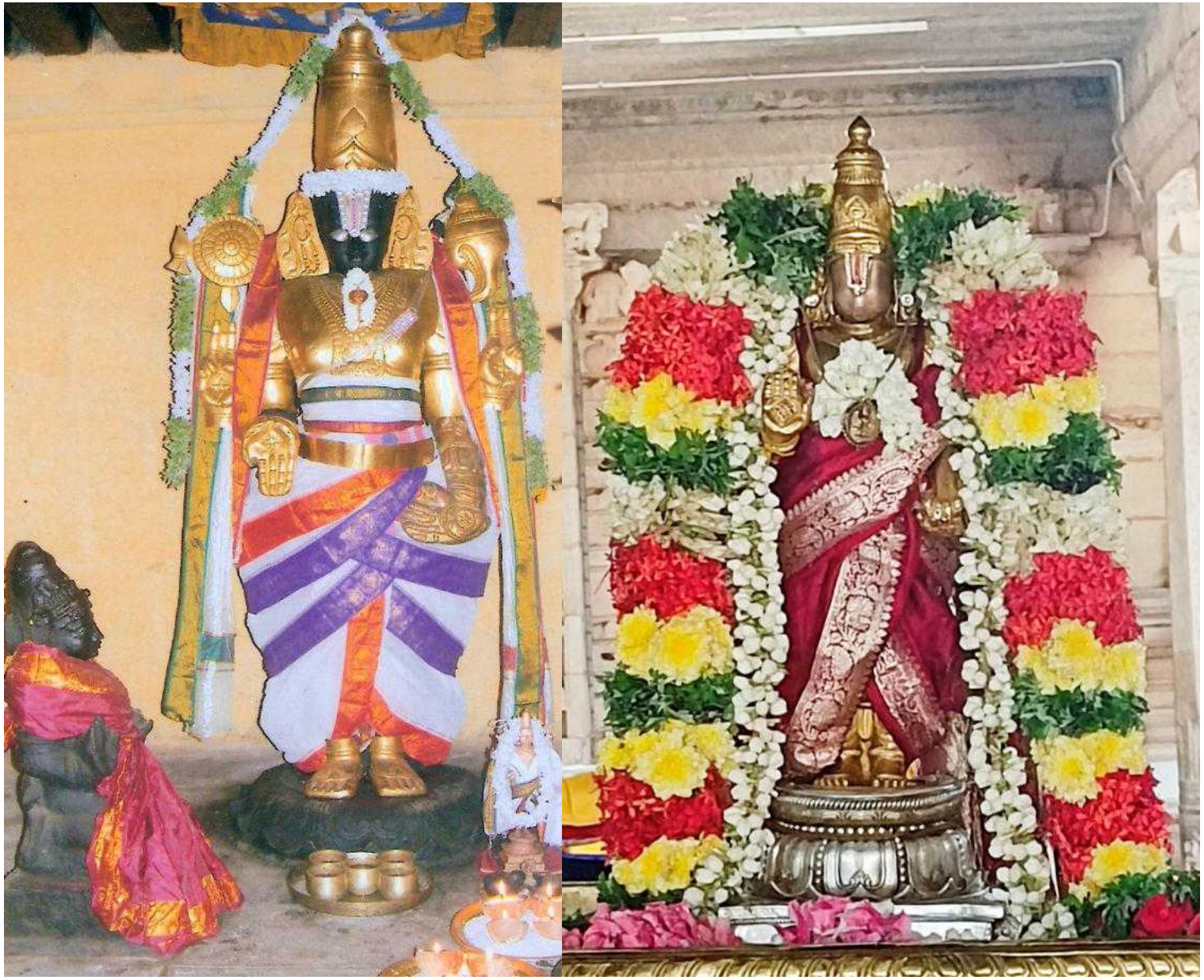
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Chera Nadhan Perumal (Srinivasan, Venkadavaannan)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kulandhaivalli (Alamelumangai) Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Mayakoothan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Perunkulam, Thamaraparani River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Aananda Nilaya Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Vedasaran (Devasaran), Kumudhavalli, Kamaladevi, Guru Brihaspati |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Chera Nadhan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in one hymn. |



Lord Sri Mayakoothar (Chera Nadhan) Perumal and Goddess Kulandhaivalli Nachiyar - Thirukkulandai

# 85 Thirukkolur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Vaithamanidhi Perumal Temple, also known as Thirukolur, is one of the sacred Nava Tirupati shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu and glorified by the hymns of Nammazhwar. According to the temple's regional legend, Kubera, the celestial treasurer and lord of wealth, was once cursed by Lord Shiva for casting a lustful glance at Goddess Parvati. Realizing his grave mistake, Kubera repented deeply and sought forgiveness from the divine couple. Shiva and Parvati, moved by his repentance, directed him to perform penance at Thirukolur. Obeying their words, Kubera undertook severe austerities at this holy site, worshipping Lord Vishnu with devotion. Pleased with his sincerity, the Lord appeared before him in resplendent form and restored to him his Nava Nidhis—the nine forms of celestial wealth. From that divine act, the Lord came to be known as Vaithamanidhi Perumal, meaning "He who safeguards the treasures," or Nikshepa Vittan, the Divine Preserver of wealth. Kubera thus attained Saapa Vimochanam, liberation from his curse, through the Lord's boundless grace. Another sacred legend associated with this shrine speaks of King Ambarisha, a great devotee of Vishnu, who renounced his throne and embraced a life of penance in the forest. To test his steadfastness, the sage Durvasa approached him and, in a moment of anger, struck him with his foot. Yet, Ambarisha remained calm and composed, filled with devotion and forgiveness. Enraged by this composure, Durvasa cursed the king. Ambarisha immediately turned to Lord Vishnu for protection. The compassionate Lord appeared before him, dispelling the curse and restoring his divine radiance. In gratitude, Ambarisha built a magnificent temple for Vishnu at this very site and worshipped Him as Ambarisha Varadar. Thirukolur is also hallowed as the Avatara Sthalam (Apperance Place) of Madurakavi Azhwar, the foremost disciple of Nammazhwar.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Vaithamanidhi Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kumudavalli Nachiyar** and **Goddess Koloorvalli Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Nikshobhavitthan (Nikshepavitthan) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kubera Theertham, Nidhi Theertham, Thamaraparani River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Srikara Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | King Ambarisha, Madurakavi Azhwar, Kubera |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vaithamanidhi Perumal sung by Nammalvar in twelve hymns.
- The greatness of this temple and its legends find mention in ancient scriptures. The Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen major Puranas composed by Sage Vyasa, includes a chapter called the Navathirupathi Mahatmya, which celebrates the sanctity of the nine sacred Vishnu shrines on the banks of the Tamiraparani River. Another revered text, the Vaikunta Mahatmya, written in Sanskrit and forming part of the Tamraparani Sthalapurana, also glorifies the divine presence of the Lord here.

Lord Sri Vaithamanidhi Perumal, Goddess Kumudhavalli and Goddess Koloorvalli – Thirukkolur

# 86 Thenthirupperai

**Sthalapuranam:**

Makara Nedunkulaikathar Temple, one of the sacred Nava Tirupati shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu, stands gloriously on the banks of the Tamiraparani River. According to the temple's regional legend, once Goddess Lakshmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, felt sorrowful when the Lord descended to earth and chose to reside with Bhudevi, the goddess of the earth. Longing for the same radiance and beauty that adorned Bhudevi, Lakshmi approached Sage Durvasa and prayed that he grant her the charm of Bhudevi herself. The sage, responding to her devotion, went to meet Bhudevi, who at that time was in the presence of Lord Vishnu. Overcome with pride and absorbed in her closeness with the Lord, Bhudevi failed to acknowledge the sage's arrival. Sage Durvasa, known for his quick temper, felt disrespected and, in a moment of divine wrath, cursed Bhudevi that her beauty would be transferred to Lakshmi. Stricken with remorse, Bhudevi fell at the sage's feet and sought forgiveness, pleading for a way to be freed from the curse. The sage, appeased by her repentance, instructed her to undertake a penance on the sacred banks of the Tamiraparani River, worshipping Lord Vishnu with unwavering devotion until she was relieved of the curse. Following his advice, Bhudevi performed severe penance on a new moon day. While offering her prayers in the holy river, she discovered a pair of magnificent earrings shaped like makaras (celestial fish). Recognizing them as a divine gift, she joyfully presented the earrings to Lord Vishnu as an offering of love and surrender. The Lord, pleased with her devotion, accepted the sacred earrings and adorned them. In that instant, Bhudevi was restored to her original divine form and radiance. Since the goddess offered the makara kundalas to the Lord, He came to be known as Makara Nedunkulaikathar—"the Great Lord who adorns the celestial fish-shaped earrings."

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Magara Nedungkulai Kathan Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kulaikkadhuvalli Nachiyar and Goddess Thirupperai Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Nigaril Mugil Vannan |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Shukra Pushkarni, Shanka Theertham, Matsya Theertham, Thamaraparani River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Bhadra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Goddess Bhudevi, Shukra, Eesanya Rudra, Lord Brahma |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Magara Nedungkulai Kathan Perumal sung by Nammalvar in eleven hymns.
- The greatness of this temple and its legends find mention in ancient scriptures. The Brahmanda Purana, one of the eighteen major Puranas composed by Sage Vyasa, includes a chapter called the Navathirupathi Mahatmya, which celebrates the sanctity of the nine sacred Vishnu shrines on the banks of the Tamiraparani River. Another revered text, the Vaikunta Mahatmya, written in Sanskrit and forming part of the Tamraparani Sthalapurana, also glorifies the divine presence of the Lord here.

Lord Sri Magara Nedungkulai Kathan Perumal, Goddess Kulaikkadhu Valli and Goddess Thirupperai Nachiyar – Thenthirupperai

# 87 Thirukkurugur (Azhwar Thirunagari)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Alwarthirunagari Perumal Temple, also known as Thirukurukur, one of the sacred Nava Tirupati shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The presiding deity, Sri Adinatha, also called Adipiran, stands majestically in ninra tirukolam (standing posture), facing east, radiating the power of divine protection and grace. Nammazhwar himself sang in praise of this Lord, declaring, "Ninra Adipiran nirka marraith dheivam naadudhire" — "When Adipiran stands here before you, why seek any other god?" Such is the glory of this temple that even celestial beings, including Indra, are said to have been freed from curses after worshipping here. The temple is renowned as a Pancha Kshetram — Adi Kshetram, Danta Kshetram, Varaha Kshetram, Sesha Kshetram, and Sangara Kshetram — each signifying the Lord's five divine aspects manifest in this sacred region. The Lord's feet are said to be buried underground, symbolizing His eternal presence anchoring the universe in righteousness. A separate sanctum houses Varaha Perumal, known as Ganapiran, further adding to the temple's sanctity. Inside, a self-manifested bronze deity (tanu uganda meniyane) of Nammazhwar stands enshrined, signifying the saint's divine union with the Lord. To the left of the temple lies the sacred tamarind tree, Thirupuli Azhwar, where Nammazhwar meditated for sixteen years in silence before his divine encounter with his disciple, Madhurakavi Alwar. Alwarthirunagari, in the days of the Pandya kings, was among the most flourishing towns in South India. The name itself, Alwar Thirunagari, meaning "the sacred city of the Alwar," reflects its exalted status as a land of pure devotion and true speech — "the place of those who first spoke the correct language of divine truth." According to tradition, Nammazhwar was born in Thirukurukur or Thiruvanparisaram in a devout Vellalar family. From birth, he displayed divine detachment, remaining silent and unmoved by the world. Realizing his transcendental nature, his parents left him at the feet of Lord Adinatha. The radiant child crawled to a nearby tamarind tree, entered its hollow, and sat in deep meditation for sixteen years. In distant Mathura, the saint Madhurakavi Alwar once beheld a celestial light from the south and followed it to Thirukurukur, where he discovered the young sage absorbed in silence. To test him, he asked a riddle: "If the small is born in the dead, what will it eat and where will it rest?" Nammazhwar replied, "It will eat, it will rest," revealing that the soul bound to the body lives through material desires but, when devoted to God, finds its sustenance in divine remembrance. Awed by this wisdom, Madhurakavi recognized the boy as a divine incarnation and became his foremost disciple, preserving his sacred hymns. Nammazhwar's compositions — Tiruvaymoli, Thiruviruttam, Thiruvaasiriam, and Periya Thiruvanthadi — embody the essence of the Vedas in Tamil and stand as the spiritual foundation of Sri Vaishnavism, illuminating the path of devotion for all time.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Aadhinatha Perumal (Aadhipiran)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Aadhinadhavalli** and **Goddess Kurugurvalli** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Polindu Nindra Piraan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Tamirand Tree (Puliya Maram) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Thamiraparani River, Brahma Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Govinda Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Nammazhwar, Indra, Lord Brahma, Madhurakavi Azhwar |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Aadhinatha Perumal sung by Nammalvar in eleven hymns.
- This sacred Kshetra is renowned for the special presence of Nammazhwar and for enshrining an ancient deity of Sri Ramanuja, believed to be over 5000 years old.

Lord Sri Aadhinatha Perumal, Goddess Aadhinadha Valli, Goddess Kurugur Valli, and Namazhwar – Thirukkurugur (Azhwar Thirunagari)

# 88 Srivillipputhur (Thiruvilliputhur)

**Sthalapuranam:**

According to sacred legend, the land around Srivilliputhur was once ruled by Queen Malli, who had two sons, Villi and Kandan. While hunting in the forest, Kandan was attacked and killed by a tiger. Unaware of his brother's fate, Villi searched tirelessly through the forest until exhaustion overtook him and he fell asleep. In his dream, a divine being appeared and revealed the tragic event. The Lord then instructed Villi to establish a city on that very land. Obeying the divine command, Villi founded the settlement, which came to be known as Sri-Villi-Puthur — "the city of Villi blessed by the Divine Mother." Over the ages, this sacred town was also known by several names, including Varaha Kshetram, Thenpuduvai, Vadeswarapuram, Vadamahadamapuram, Shenbagaranya Kshetram, Vikrama Chola Chaturvedhi Mangalam, and Sridhanvipuri. Ancient scriptures describe Srivilliputhur as Varaha Kshetra, a holy land once covered by dense forests of fragrant champaka trees. Here, the great sages Bhrigu and Markandeya performed intense penance, establishing their hermitages amid nature's serenity. Their austerities were disturbed by a fierce demon named Kalanerai, who caused havoc in the region. The sages prayed fervently to Lord Vishnu for protection. In response to their devotion, the Lord manifested in that very forest to destroy the demon and protect His devotees. After the victory, He chose to remain there, reclining on Adisesha — the divine serpent — upon a banyan leaf, bestowing peace and sanctity upon the region. From then, the land was also known as Vadaveshwarapuram. In this blessed town lived Periyalvar, originally known as Vishnuchittar, an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. Every day, he lovingly prepared and offered fresh flower garlands to the deity. Though devoted, he had no children and prayed earnestly for divine grace. One day, while tending to the temple garden, he found a radiant infant girl beneath a tulasi plant. Seeing this as a divine gift, he and his wife joyfully adopted her, naming her Kothai. From childhood, Kothai was deeply devoted to Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu. Out of her boundless love, she would adorn herself with the garlands meant for the Lord before offering them. When Vishnuchittar discovered this, he was initially distressed that the garlands had been worn by a mortal before being offered to the deity. But that very night, Lord Vishnu appeared in his dream and instructed him to offer only the garlands worn by Kothai, declaring that He found them especially dear. From that moment, the girl became revered as Andal, meaning "the one who rules over the Lord through love," and also as Chudikodutha Sudarkodi — "the radiant maiden who offered her worn garlands to the Lord." It is also believed that Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam accepted Andal as His divine consort. On the day of their celestial wedding, Andal was taken in a grand procession from Srivilliputhur to Srirangam, where she merged eternally with the deity. Since the Lord manifested as a royal bridegroom, He is worshipped here as Rangamannar, the Divine King who united with Andal, the embodiment of pure devotion.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Vatapatrasayee Perumal** and **Lord Sri Rangamannar Perumal** *(Bhujanga (Vadabhadra) Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East) and* (*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Kodhadevi (Andal)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Thirumukkulam Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Samsana Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Sage Bhrigu, Sage Markandeya, Andal, Sage Manduka, Periyazhwar

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Vatapatrasayee Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in one hymn and Andal in one hymn.
- The temple's towering gopuram serves as the official emblem of the Tamil Nadu State Government. This sacred site is the birthplace of Andal, the divine incarnation of Goddess Bhudevi, and the only Divyadesam where Andal herself is worshipped as the principal Thayar. It is also the revered abode of Periyazhwar.

Lord Sri Vatapatrasayee Perumal and Goddess Kodhadevi – Srivillipputhur

# 89 Thiruthangal (Thirutthankkalur)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Ninra Narayana Perumal Temple, also known as Thiruthankaal Divya Desam, is a sacred shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu, located in Thiruthangal, a town near Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu. The temple, perched on a rocky hillock known as Thalagiri. According to the temple's Sthala Purana, a gentle dispute once arose among the divine consorts of Vishnu — Sridevi, Bhudevi, and Niladevi — over who was the most devoted to the Lord. To demonstrate her pure and steadfast devotion, Sridevi descended to the earth and selected a serene spot surrounded by lush paddy fields for her penance. There, she immersed herself in deep meditation and worship. The radiance of her devotion drew the attention of many sages, who began to worship her at that very place. Realising that solitary life was improper for a devotee, Sridevi created a sacred tirtha (holy water body) and continued her prayers, invoking the Lord's presence. Moved by her unshakeable devotion, Lord Vishnu appeared before her in divine splendour. When Bhudevi and Niladevi witnessed this, they too came down to the spot and conceded that Sridevi's devotion was unparalleled. As Vishnu chose to stay (thangal in Tamil) there with His consorts, the place came to be known as Thiruthangal, the "Holy Abode of the Divine Stay." Another legend states that Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krishna, was married at this very site, sanctifying it further with the auspicious presence of the Yadava lineage. A third legend connects Thiruthangal with the divine love of Andal. It is said that when Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam was deeply moved by Andal's devotion, He began His journey to Srivilliputhur to wed her. As evening descended, He chose to rest for the night on this hill before continuing onward. Since the Lord "stayed" (thangal) here, the hill came to be called Thalagiri and the place Thiruthangal. The Brahmanda Purana also glorifies this sacred kshetra in its eighth chapter, narrating the story of King Puroora Chakravarthy of Bharata Varsha. When the king grew old, he renounced his kingdom and sought guidance from sages on where to perform penance. The sages directed him to Thiruthangal, and after performing intense austerities there, Lord Mahavishnu appeared before him and blessed him with divine vision. In another episode, a Pandya ruler named Devendra Vallabha was once hunting in the forest when he encountered a tiger near Thiruthangal. As he drew his bow to shoot, a divine voice revealed that the tiger was the rebirth of King Chandraketu, who in a previous life had neglected his penances. The Lord then appeared before both the king and the tiger, granting them liberation. The rock near the temple where this occurred is still known as Puliparai — puli meaning tiger and parai meaning rock — in remembrance of this divine incident. A further legend tells of a debate between the banyan tree and Adishesha, the divine serpent of Vishnu, over who was closer to the Lord. When Brahma was called to mediate, he ruled in favour of Adishesha, granting him the privilege of serving as Vishnu's celestial couch. The banyan tree, feeling disheartened, began a long and earnest penance to the Lord at Thiruthangal. Pleased by his devotion, Vishnu appeared before the banyan tree and granted him a boon that He would eternally sit upon him in this sacred place. Thus, the very hill on which the temple stands is believed to be the transformed form of that devoted banyan tree, and is revered as Thangalgiri.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Ninra Narayana Perumal (Thiruthangaalappan)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddesses Sengamala Thayar, Annanayaki, Anandanayaki, Amruthanayaki** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Papavinasha Theertham, Bhaskara Theertham, Shanka Theertham, Padma Theeram, Arjuna Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Devachandra Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Goddess Sridevi, King Chandraketu, King Devendra Vallabha, King Puroora Chakravarthy, Adishesha, Banyan tree, Tiger, Salya Pandiyan |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ninra Narayana Perumal sung by Boodhatazhwar in one hymn and Thirumangai Azhwar in four hymns. |

Lord Sri Ninra Narayana Perumal and Goddess Sengamala – Thiruthangal

# 90 Thirukkoodal

**Sthalapuranam:**

Koodal Azhagar Temple is one of the most ancient and revered temples of Lord Vishnu, located in the sacred city of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. According to the Koodal Purana, the origin of the holy Vaigai River, which flows through Madurai, is intimately linked to this sacred site. When Lord Vishnu manifested as Trivikrama and raised His foot to measure the heavens, it reached Brahmaloka, the abode of Lord Brahma. Filled with reverence, Brahma performed an ablution to the raised foot of the Lord, and from this act, the sanctified water flowed down to the earth as a rivulet known as Krithimala. The region surrounding this divine stream blossomed with countless banana trees, earning the name Kadhalivana — the Forest of Banana Trees. In the ancient era, a Pandya ruler named Satyavrata ruled over Madurai and was a devout worshipper of Lord Vishnu. Once, while performing austerities on the banks of the Krithimala River, Vishnu appeared before him in the form of Matsya Avatara — the Divine Fish — to impart the eternal truths of the Vedas. Overwhelmed by this divine revelation, Satyavrata and his descendants adopted the fish (meen) as the royal emblem of the Pandya kingdom, symbolizing their eternal devotion to the Lord who appeared as the Fish Incarnation. During the Mahapralaya — the Great Deluge — when the worlds faced dissolution, devotees sought refuge in Madurai. In His infinite compassion, Vishnu is believed to have stood as a mighty bulwark against the cosmic floods, protecting His devotees from annihilation. Because of this divine act, the city came to be called Naanmadakoodal or Koodal Nagar — "the city of divine assembly and protection," for koodal in Tamil signifies both gathering and fortification. Another sacred legend connects the temple to the illustrious life of Periyalvar (Vishnuchittar), one of the twelve Azhwars and a foremost saint of the Sri Vaishnava tradition. During the reign of King Vallabhadeva of Madurai, the ruler would disguise himself daily to observe the lives of his subjects and understand their thoughts. Once, he encountered a learned scholar who advised that the essence of life lay in "collecting provisions in summer to use in winter" — symbolizing that one should work in youth and save for old age. Unsatisfied with this worldly counsel, the king invited scholars to enlighten him on the true purpose of human life. Guided by divine command, Vishnuchittar journeyed from Srivilliputhur to Madurai to participate in this assembly. Standing before the royal court, he expounded profound truths from the Vedas, explaining Hitham (the means) and Purushartham (the supreme goals of life), declaring that eternal bliss is attained only by surrendering to the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. As he concluded, celestial beings showered flowers from the heavens, and the Lord Himself appeared, blessing Vishnuchittar as "Periyalvar," the Great Saint. King Vallabhadeva, deeply moved by his wisdom and devotion, honored him with a bag of gold. It is believed that with this gold, Periyalvar constructed the magnificent gopuram of the Srivilliputhur Temple. This abode is also known as Haalaasya Kshethram.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Koodal Alagar Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Madhuravalli Thayar (Maragathavalli, Varagunavalli, and Vakulavalli)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kruthaamaala River, Hema Pushkarni, Vaigai River, Chakra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ashtanga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Bhirgu, Sage Saunaka, Demigods, Periyazhwar |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Koodal Alagar Perumal sung by Thirumazhisai Azhwar in one hymn and Thirumangai Azhwar in one hymn. |

Lord Sri Koodal Alagar Perumal and Goddess Madhuravalli Thayar – Thirukkoodal

# 91 Thirumalirunchola (Azhagar Koil)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Kallalagar Temple, also known as Kallazhagar Temple or Thirumalirunchola, is one of the most ancient and revered shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu, situated amidst the verdant slopes of the Azhagar Hills near Madurai. The presiding deity, Sundararaja Perumal, affectionately called Kallalagar—the Beautiful Lord of the Hills—is praised in the Tamil classic Silappadikaram and in the hymns of the Azhwars as one who blesses the world from His sacred abode in the forest-clad hills. According to legend, Sage Suthapas was once bathing in the holy Nupura Ganga that flows from the Azhagar Hill when Sage Durvasa happened to pass by. Absorbed in meditation, Suthapas failed to notice and greet him. Angered by this apparent disrespect, Durvasa cursed him to be born as a frog until he was redeemed by Lord Vishnu Himself. The sage, thus transformed into Manduka Maharishi, performed intense penance on the banks of the Vaigai River, then known as Vegavathi, at a place called Thenur. Moved by his unwavering devotion, Lord Vishnu descended from His hill abode to relieve the sage of his curse. Another sacred legend tells that Yama, the god of death, once worshipped Lord Vishnu here and, blessed by His grace, requested Him to remain eternally in this holy place to protect devotees from worldly and spiritual suffering. Further, Long ago, eighteen magicians from a distant land attempted to steal the deity of Lord Azhagar using their occult powers. Among them was Karuppan, who had been sent to assist in their mission. However, when he beheld the divine radiance of Lord Azhagar, his heart was transformed. Refusing to take part in the act, he surrendered to the Lord in repentance. By the Lord's will, the magicians were exposed and buried near the temple steps, while Karuppan was forgiven and blessed for his devotion. In recognition of his loyalty, Lord Azhagar appointed him as the guardian of the temple and the sacred eighteen steps—hence the name Pathinettam Padi Karuppasamy. The main tower entrance (Mukya Gopuram) of the temple remains permanently sealed, and behind it lies the shrine of Karuppasamy. These steps are revered as the abode of the divine guardian, and ancient belief holds that they are charged with immense spiritual power. Once a year, the great doors are ceremoniously opened, allowing the Sudarshana Chakra, the celestial discus of Lord Vishnu, to pass through in procession. This sanctified site is also known as Vrushabhadri Kshetram.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Kallazhagar Perumal (Azhagar, Malalankarar, Malirunsolai Nambi, Sundararaja, Sri Paramaswami)**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Kalyana Sundaravalli (Sridevi, Bhudevi)**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Noopra Ganga, Silambu River

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Somasundara Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Thirumangai Azhwar, Andal, Nammazhwar, Peyazhwar, Periyazhwar, Bhoodhatazhwar, Manduka Maharishi, Malyadhwaja Pandiyan, Dharma Devata

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kallazhagar Perumal sung by Bhoodhatazhwar in three hymns, Peyazhwar in one hymn, Nammazhwar in Fourty-six hymns, Periyazhwar in Thirty-four hymns, Andal in eleven hymns, and Thirumangai Azhwar in thirty-three hymns.

Lord Sri Kallaḻagar (Sundararaja) Perumal and Goddess Kalyana Sundaravalli – Thirumaliruncholai

# 92 Thirumogur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thirumohoor Kalamegaperumal Temple, situated near Melur in the Madurai district of Tamil Nadu, is one of the celebrated Divya Desams—sacred abodes of Lord Vishnu glorified by the Azhwars. The presiding deity, Kaalamegha Perumal, blesses devotees with wisdom, protection, and guidance, and is affectionately known as Maarga Bandhu, the divine friend and guide who shows the way to liberation. According to legend, an asura named Bhasmasura once performed intense penance to please Lord Shiva and was granted a perilous boon—that whoever's head he touched would be reduced to ashes. Drunk with power, the asura immediately attempted to test his boon on Shiva himself. Terrified, Shiva fled and sought refuge with Lord Vishnu. The compassionate Lord assumed the enchanting form of the celestial maiden Mohini and appeared before Bhasmasura. Bewitched by Mohini's grace and charm, the asura requested her to dance with him. Mohini agreed on the condition that he must mirror her every movement. As the divine dance unfolded, Mohini placed her hand upon her own head. The deluded Bhasmasura imitated her action and was instantly consumed by the fire of his own boon. The spot where Vishnu, as Mohini, lured and destroyed the asura thus came to be known as Thirumohur—the sacred place of divine enchantment. Another legend speaks of the great conflict between the Devas and the Asuras before the churning of the cosmic ocean for amrita, the nectar of immortality. When the Asuras began to overpower the Devas, they prayed to Lord Vishnu for deliverance. In response, Vishnu again took the form of Mohini during the Samudra Manthanam and skillfully deceived the Asuras, distributing the divine nectar only among the Devas. This act of divine wisdom and compassion is believed to have taken place at Thirumohur, making it a site sanctified by one of the Lord's most beautiful and mysterious incarnations. Devotees believe that Lord Kaalamegha Perumal not only removes the darkness of ignorance but also personally accompany the souls in the path of liberation.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Kalamegha Perumal (Vazhithunai Perumal, Maarga Bandhu)**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Meghavalli (Mohanavalli, Thirumogurvalli)**

**Utsavar (Procession Deity):** Sri Thirumogur Aapthan

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Ksheerabdhi Pushkarini, Brahma Theertham, Papanasa Theertham, Swarkkathvaara Theertham, Naragaasura Theertham, Parama Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Ketaki Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:** Lord Brahma, Lord Indra, Aja Rudra (Lord Shiva),

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Kalamegha Perumal sung by Nammazhwar in eleven hymns and Thirumangai Azhwar in one hymn.
- Within the temple, the awe-inspiring image of Chakkarathazhvar, or the divine Sudarshana Chakra, commands reverence. This form of the Lord's discus is depicted here with sixteen hands and sixteen arms, each symbolizing a distinct aspect of cosmic protection and divine energy. Inscriptions engraved on the deity contain 154 sacred letters that signify the destruction of the demon Hiranyakashipu (Hiranya Samharam), along with forty-eight miniature depictions of various divine forms. No other Divya Desam possesses such an extraordinary representation of Chakkarathazhvar, making Thirumohoor unique among all Vishnu shrines.

Lord Sri Kalamegha Perumal and Goddess Mohavalli – Thirumogur

# 93 Thirukkoshtiyur

**Sthalapuranam:**

Sowmyanarayana Perumal Temple, located in the serene village of Thirukoshtiyur in Tamil Nadu, is one of the most sacred and historically revered shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu. According to ancient legend, when the asura king Hiranyakashipu received boons from Lord Brahma that rendered him nearly invincible, his arrogance knew no bounds. Drunk with power, he began tormenting the devas and all those devoted to Lord Vishnu. Unable to bear his tyranny, the devas and sages sought refuge at the feet of the Lord, praying for deliverance. Moved by their distress, Lord Vishnu prepared to incarnate as Narasimha, the man-lion form destined to destroy the demon. Before manifesting this fierce and wondrous form, however, the devas pleaded to witness the divine vision of the avatara. To fulfill their earnest desire, Vishnu revealed Himself in three majestic postures—standing, sitting, and reclining—at Thirukoshtiyur. Because the Lord manifested these forms after the koshti (council or deliberation) of the devas, the place came to be known as Thirukoshtiyur, meaning "the sacred place of divine counsel." The temple enshrines Lord Sowmyanarayana Perumal in these three postures across its different levels of temple tower. Equally renowned is the temple's association with Sri Ramanuja, the great 11th-century acharya who systematized the philosophy of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta and established the path of devotion (bhakti marga) as accessible to all. Thirukoshtiyur was the abode of his guru, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi, a revered Vaishnava saint. After rigorous tests of humility and sincerity, Nambi imparted to Ramanuja the supreme and secret mantra, the Ashtakshara—"Om Namo Narayanaya"—instructing him never to reveal it to the uninitiated. Overwhelmed by compassion for suffering humanity and desiring that all should attain liberation through the Lord's holy name, Ramanuja ascended the temple's high tower and proclaimed the sacred mantra aloud for all to hear, disregarding his own safety. When his guru confronted him for disobeying orders, Ramanuja humbly replied that if his act condemned him to hell but granted salvation to countless souls, it was a price he was willing to pay. Moved by his selfless spirit and divine love, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi embraced him and declared, "You are indeed my Emperumanar—my Lord and superior." To commemorate this momentous event, a life-sized deity of Sri Ramanuja was consecrated in the temple's Ashtanga Mandapam, where devotees still bow before his form in reverence. Even today, the chants of "Om Namo Narayanaya" echo through the ancient corridors of Thirukoshtiyur, reminding all who visit that the path to liberation lies in humility, love, and the boundless mercy of Lord Sowmyanarayana.

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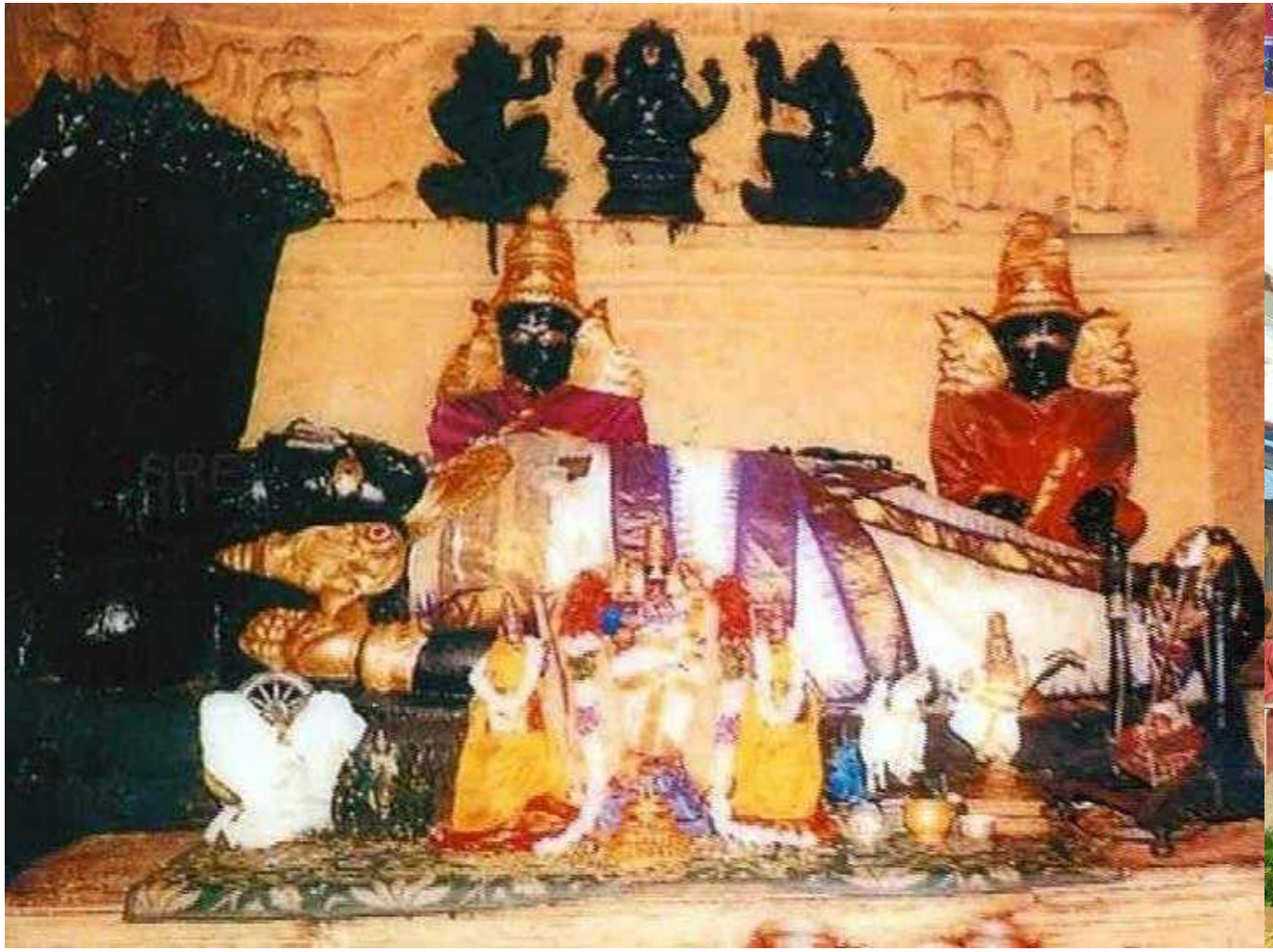
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Uraga Mellanaiyan Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Thirumamagal Nachiyar** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Sowmya Narayana Perumal |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Deva Pushkarini (Thirupparkadal – Ksheerabhdi) |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ashtanga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Indra, Sage Kadamba, Demigods |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Uraga Mellanaiyan Perumal sung by Boodhatazhwar in two hymns, Peyazhwar in one hymn, Thirumazhisai Azhwar in one hymn, Periyazhwar in twenty-two hymns and Thirumangai Azhwar in thirteen hymns.



Lord Sri Uraga Mellanaiyan Perumal and Goddess Thirumamagal – Thirukkoshtiyur

# 94 Thiruppullani (Ramanathapuram)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Adi Jagannatha Temple, located in Thiruppullani near Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu, is one of the most ancient and revered temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The presiding deity, Adi Jagannatha Perumal, is seen seated majestically with Goddess Sridevi and Bhudevi, blessing devotees from His sanctum. This sacred site is also known as Dakshina Jagannatha Kshetram, representing the southern abode of Lord Jagannatha—while the northern abode is at Puri. According to legend, when Lord Rama was preparing for His divine mission to rescue Sita from Lanka, He arrived at Thiruppullani and prayed to Samudraraja, the Lord of the Ocean, seeking a passage across the sea. However, the Ocean God remained silent, testing the Lord's patience. In response, Rama undertook a severe penance, lying upon a bed of sacred darbha grass — an act revered in Sanskrit as Dharbasayanam. Puzzled by the Supreme Lord's act of humility and forbearance, Samudraraja continued his silence until Rama, in righteous anger, prepared to release a fiery arrow to dry up the ocean. Alarmed, the Ocean God immediately appeared, offered his surrender, and promised to calm the turbulent waters. He then instructed Lord Rama to build the great bridge to Lanka. The very shore where the Lord performed this sacred penance is venerated to this day, and the presiding deity here is worshipped as Darbha Sayana Rama. Another legend states that at this very site, Lord Rama met Pulla Maharishi under a sacred peepal tree and offered prayers to Lord Adi Jagannatha before setting forth on His journey to Lanka. The Lord, pleased with Rama's devotion, bestowed upon Him a divine bow which later became the weapon used to vanquish Ravana. The temple's name "Thiruppullani" is believed to have been derived from the sage's name, Pulla Maharishi, whose penance sanctified this land. In another episode, King Dasharatha, the father of Rama, came to Thiruppullani and performed several sacrifices and deep penances to be blessed with children. Moved by his devotion, Lord Adi Jagannatha appeared before him and granted him the sacred payasam, which he distributed among his three queens. From this divine offering were born the four illustrious sons—Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. It was also at Thiruppullani that Vibhishana, the noble brother of Ravana, sought refuge at the feet of Lord Rama. While the Vanara army was wary of his intentions, Hanuman, with folded hands, interceded and requested Rama to accept Vibhishana's surrender. Moved by compassion, Rama declared the eternal doctrine of surrender—"I cannot reject anyone who comes to me for protection. This is my dharma. Even if Ravana himself were to come, I would not turn him away. How then can I reject his brother who has done me no wrong?" This divine assurance, known as the doctrine of Saranagati or complete surrender, became one of the core tenets of the Vaishnava faith, revered alongside the Bhagavad Gita itself. Furthermore, it was at this very place that Lord Rama crowned Vibhishana as the King of Lanka. For this reason, Thiruppullani is revered as Saranagathi Kshetram, the holy abode of surrender, and Rathnakara Kshetram, the sacred shore of the Ocean Lord.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Adi Jagannatha (Kalyana Jagannatha) Perumal** and **Lord Sri Dharbha Shayana Perumal (Chakravarthi Thirumagan Rama)**
(*Sitting posture* - facing East) and *(Bhujanga (Dharbha) Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)*

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Kalyanavalli** and **Goddess Padmasani**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Hamsa Theertham, Varuna Theertham, Tharuma Theertham, Adhi Sethu (Sethu Theertham, Ratnakara Samudram), Rama Theertham, Hema Theertham, Chakra Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

Kalyana Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Ashwatha Narayana, Varuna (Occean God), Sage Pulla Maharishi, Dasaratha

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Adi Jagannatha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in twenty-one hymns.

Lord Sri Adi Jagannatha (Kalyana Jagannatha) Perumal, Goddess Kalyanavalli, Goddess Padmasani and Lord Sri Dharbha Shayana Perumal – Thiruppullani

# 95 Thirumeyyam

**Sthalapuranam:**

Sathyamurthi Perumal Temple, located in Thirumayam, a serene town in Tamil Nadu, is an ancient shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu. According to the Brahmanda Purana, Adishesha, the divine serpent who serves as the celestial bed of Lord Vishnu, once desired to transform his inherent tamas (quality of darkness) into sattva (purity and light). With this noble intent, he undertook deep penance in the netherworld, his path emerging on earth as the sacred river Pamapar. Pleased by his devotion and austerity, Lord Vishnu appeared before him in the radiant form of Hayagriva—the horse-headed incarnation known as the embodiment of divine wisdom—and blessed him with the boon he sought. It is also believed that Chandra, the moon god, performed penance here, and the Lord manifested before him as Vamana, the divine dwarf who once humbled the pride of King Mahabali. Another beautiful legend speaks of a saintly sage named Satya who performed intense penance at this very spot. Lord Vishnu, moved by the sage's unwavering devotion, appeared before him and granted him the boon of perpetual divine presence—that the Lord would manifest to him whenever he desired. The sage, deeply attached to the tranquil setting where he performed his austerities, did not wish to leave the banks of the river. In response to his devotion, Vishnu transformed the sacred landscape itself: the river became a Pushkarani (holy tank), the surrounding rock took the form of Meyyam hill, and the nearby banyan tree became a divine Asvatta (peepal tree). Continuing his penance, the sage eventually longed for liberation. The Lord then revealed that his salvation would coincide with that of King Pururava, a righteous ruler of that era. To fulfill this divine plan, Vishnu assumed the form of a mighty boar and began creating havoc in Pururava's kingdom. Pursuing the boar into the forest, the king reached the sage's hermitage. As the boar vanished, the sage, disturbed from his meditation, opened his eyes, and both he and the king beheld Lord Vishnu appearing before them in resplendent glory. Granting them divine vision, the Lord blessed the sage with salvation and instructed King Pururava to build a temple at that very site. The king obeyed the command, and thus arose the sacred shrine of Sathyamurthi Perumal.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Sathyagirinatha Perumal (Sathyamurthi)** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Uyya Vandha Nachiyar (Ujjeevana Thayar)** |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Meyyappan, Sri Rajagopalan |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Pala Vriksham (Jackfruit tree) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Kadamba Pushkarini, Sathya Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Sathyagiri Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Satya, Adishesha, Chandra, King Pururava |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Sathyagirinatha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in nine hymns.
- The temple is maintained and administered by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as a protected heritage monument.

Lord Sri Sathyagirinatha Perumal, Goddess Uyya Vandha Nachiyar and Lord Sri Ranganatha – Thirumeyyam

# 96 Thiruvayodhi (Ayodhya)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Ayodhya, one of the Saptha Mukthi Kshetrams (Seven Sacred Abodes of Liberation), holds a unique and exalted place among the Divyadesams. Each of these seven sacred kshetrams is believed to represent a divine part of Sriman Narayana's transcendental body. Avanti represents His lotus feet, Kanchipuram His waist, Dwaraka His navel, Maya (Haridwar) His chest, Mathura His neck, Kasi His nose, and finally, Ayodhya represents the divine head of the Lord. For this reason, Ayodhya is considered the foremost among these mukti sthalas, being both the birthplace and the liberation place (mukthi sthalam) of Lord Rama. According to ancient scriptures, Ayodhya was once adorned with 2,700 temples dedicated to Lord Sri Rama along the sacred southern bank of the Sarayu River. It is believed that Lord Brahma himself performed penance to Sriman Narayana here. Pleased with his intense devotion, the Lord appeared before Brahma, embracing him with divine affection. So moved was the Lord by Brahma's devotion that tears of joy welled up in His eyes. To prevent those divine tears from falling upon the earth, Brahma collected them in his kamandalam (sacred vessel). With his spiritual power, he created a sacred lake where those tears merged with his heartfelt meditation, thus forming the holy Maanasasaras in the Himalayas. Later, when King Ikshvaku ruled Ayodhya, he expressed his wish to Sage Vasishta that a sacred river should flow through his kingdom. The sage, moved by his devotion, sought Brahma's assistance in Satyaloka. With the blessings of Brahma, the waters of Maanasasaras were brought down to earth to flow through Ayodhya as the revered Sarayu River. The Ramayana, which unfolds in this sacred land, tells of the divine life of Lord Rama, born to King Dasaratha and Queen Kausalya as the very personification of dharma, compassion, and valor. Rama's birth in Ayodhya marked the dawn of righteousness on earth. The Lord's exile, His unwavering adherence to truth, His victory over Ravana, and His eventual return to Ayodhya symbolize the triumph of good over evil and the restoration of cosmic order. After fulfilling the purpose of His incarnation, Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya and ruled as the ideal king, ushering in the golden age known as Rama Rajya—an era of peace, prosperity, and righteousness. At the conclusion of His earthly mission, the Lord entered the Sarayu River and ascended to Paramapadam (Vaikuntha), along with all the citizens of Ayodhya who followed Him with unflinching devotion. Even today, Ayodhya shines as the mukthi kshetra that crowns the Lord's divine form. The sacred Sarayu continues to flow with the Lord's grace, and every grain of Ayodhya's soil is believed to echo with the chants of "Rama, Rama." The foremost of all Divyadesams, Srirangam, enshrines Lord Ranganatha, whose divine deity first manifested before Lord Brahma in Satyaloka. Through the devotion of King Ikshvaku, the sacred deity was brought down to Ayodhya, where it was worshipped on the banks of the Sarayu River by generations of kings from the Solar dynasty. During Lord Rama's reign, He gifted this revered deity to Vibhishana, who later enshrined it on the banks of the Kaveri River at Srirangam. In a later age, the same Lakshmana, devoted servant of Lord Rama, incarnated as Sri Ramanujacharya and continued the divine service and propagation of Lord Ranganatha's worship.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Ramachandra Perumal (Chakravarthi Thirumagan, Raghunayakan)** (*Sitting posture* - facing North) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Seethadevi** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Sarayu River, Paramapadasatya Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Pushkala Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sages, Lord Brahma, Demigods |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ramachandra Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in six hymns, Nammazhwar in one hymn, Kulasekhara Azhwar in four hymns, Tondaradipodi Azhwar in one hymn and Thirumangai Azhwar in one hymn. |

Lord Sri Ramachandra Perumal and Goddess Seethadevi - Thiruvayodhi (Ayodhya)

# 97 Thirunaimisaranyam

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| **Sthalapuranam:** | In the ancient times, all the great Maha Rishis, along with Sage Saunaka, approached Lord Brahma and humbly asked Him to reveal the most sacred and suitable place on earth to perform yajna (sacrifice) and tapas (penance). In response, Lord Brahma took a blade of darbha grass, fashioned it into the shape of a wheel, and rolled it upon the earth. He declared that the spot where the wheel would come to rest would be the ideal place for performing divine austerities. As the sacred wheel rolled across the lands, it finally came to rest in a beautiful, serene forest on earth. Brahma then proclaimed this to be the chosen place, sanctified by divine will, and named it Naimisaranyam. The name itself holds deep meaning — Nemi means "wheel" or "chakra," Naimisam refers to the place where the wheel landed, and Aranyam means "forest." Thus, Naimisaranyam means "the forest where the divine wheel descended." From that time onward, Naimisaranyam became a sacred center for sages, saints, and yogis. The presiding deity of this holy place is Lord Vishnu, who manifests in the form of the forest itself. According to an ancient legend, the demon Gayasura performed penance at Naimisaranyam, where Lord Vishnu appeared before him. Filled with pride, Gayasura claimed he was mightier than Vishnu and refused any boon. To humble him, Vishnu sent His Sudarshana Chakra, which split Gayasura's body into three parts — his head at Badari (Siro Gaya), his middle at Naimisaranyam (Nabhi Gaya), and his feet at Gaya in Bihar (Carana Gaya). These three sacred sites together form the Gaya Tristhalam, where performing ancestral rites grants great merit and liberation to one's forefathers. Once, Lord Balarama, the elder brother of Sri Krishna, visited Naimisaranyam, where Sage Suta was immersed in reciting the Puranas and failed to notice His arrival. Feeling disrespected, Balarama struck the sage in anger, causing his death. Realizing his grave mistake, Balarama undertook a year-long pilgrimage to various sacred kshetras for penance. When he returned to Naimisaranyam, he found the sages troubled by a demon named Vilvala. Balarama slew the demon, freeing the forest from fear and restoring peace, enabling the rishis to continue their spiritual practices undisturbed. At Naimisaranyam, Indra, king of the devas, was once defeated by the mighty asura Vritra, who could not be harmed by ordinary weapons. Following Brahma's advice, Indra performed penance to Lord Vishnu for two thousand years. Vishnu revealed that only a weapon made from Sage Dadhichi's bones could defeat Vritra. The noble sage willingly sacrificed himself, and from his spine, Indra made the powerful Vajra, with which he killed Vritra and regained his throne. Naimisaranyam is thus celebrated as one of the eight self-manifested (Swayamvyakta) Vishnu abodes, where the Lord revealed Himself without human consecration. The other seven are: Srirangam, Tirumala, Vanamamalai, Saligrama (Muktinath), Pushkar, Badrinath and Srimushnam. Among these sacred abodes, Naimisaranyam stands out as the very heart of divine wisdom, where Lord Vishnu pervades the forest in all forms, blessing sages, devas, and devotees alike. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Devaraja Perumal (Sri Hari)**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Harilakshmi (Pundareekavalli)** |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Tapovanam (The Entire Forest is form of Lord Narayana) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Gomathi River, Chakkra Theertham, Nemi Theertham, Divya Visranta Theerthams |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Sri Hari Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Indra, Sudharma, Narada, Vedavyasa, Suta Goswami, Brahma |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Devaraja Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in ten hymns. |

Lord Sri Devaraja Perumal and Goddess Harilakshmi – Thirunaimisaranyam

# 98 Thirupruthi (Nanda Prayag, Jyothirmath)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Joshimath, perched in the Himalayas at an altitude of 6,150 feet above sea level on the route from Rishikesh to Badrinath, is a revered spiritual hub, home to ancient temples dedicated to Lord Narasimha and Vasudeva. According to local lore, a king named Nandar performed numerous yajnas here for the welfare of humanity, earning the place the name Nandaprayag. Sage Kanva is also said to have lived here. According to legend, King Vasudev, a devout follower of Lord Narasimha, once went hunting. During his absence, Lord Narasimha appeared in disguise at the king's palace. The queen offered food to the disguised deity, who later rested in the king's chamber. Upon his return, the king, enraged to find a stranger in his bed, struck the figure with his sword, cutting off its left hand. Miraculously, milk flowed from the wound instead of blood, revealing the deity's true identity. Lord Narasimha, pleased yet firm, explained that though he was content with the king's devotion, the incident necessitated the relocation of the kingdom to Baijnath. The deity in the temple bears this mark; its left hand remains fragile, and local belief holds that when this hand breaks, it will signal the end of the dynasty and a cosmic transformation: the mountains Nar and Narayan along the path to Badrinath will merge, and the deity of Badrinath will vanish from the present temple and reappear as a black stone (Shaligram) at the future site, Bhavishya Badri, ten kilometers from Joshimath. Thirumangai Azhwar sang of the Lord of Thirupruthi as Paramapurusha (Ranganatha), yet successive destructions over time have left no trace of the shrine he described. After several natural and social calamities, present temple of Lord Narasimha was established by Adi Shankaracharya. It is the first mutt founded by Sri Adi Shankara, he also said to have authored the Sri Sankara Bhashyam here. In the Narasimha temple, the presiding deity, Lord Badrinarayan, is enshrined along with a pantheon of accompanying deities, and is believed to have been established by Adi Shankaracharya himself. During winter, when the Badrikashramam at Badrinath is closed, the Utsava deity of Lord Badrinath is brought to Joshimath and worshiped as Badri Narayan for six months, ensuring continuous devotional service and protection for the devotees.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Paramapurusha Perumal**<br>*(Bhujanga Shayanam - Reclining Posture facing East)* |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Parimalavalli** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Maanasaras, Govardhana Theertham, Indra Theertham |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Govardhana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Goddess Parvathi |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Paramapurusha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in ten hymns. |

Lord Sri Paramapurusha Perumal and Goddess Parimalavalli - Thirupruthi (Jyothirmath)

# 99 Thirukkandamenum Kadinagar (Deva Prayag)

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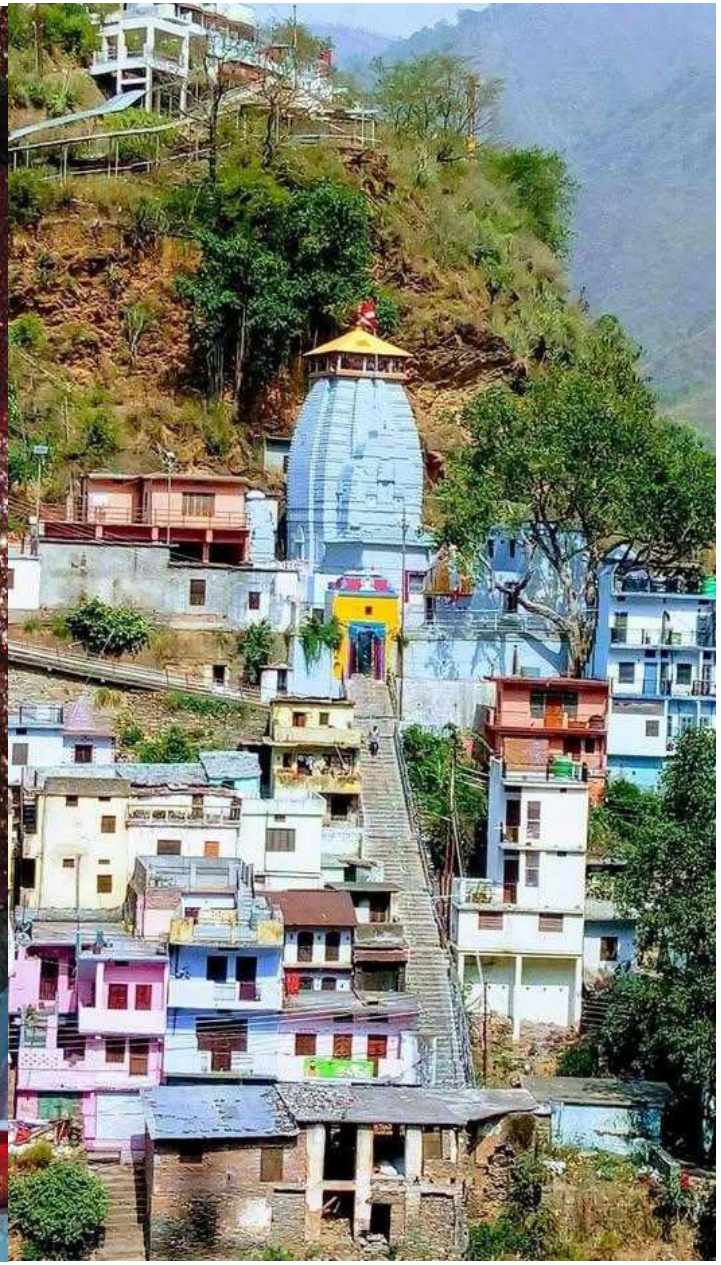
| **Sthalapuranam:** | Raghunathji Temple, also known as Tirukantamenum Kadi Nagar, is located in Devprayag, in the district of Uttarakhand, nestled in the Himalayas. The temple is dedicated to Lord Rama. Deva Prayag, meaning "Holy Confluence," is named after the Sage Deva Sharma, who devoted his life to penance and was blessed with a vision of Lord Rama. Further, according to legend, Lord Rama is believed to have performed penance here to relieve the sin of Brahmahatya incurred by killing Ravana, the Brahmin rakshasa king. While offering prayers in the waters of Devprayag, Rama rescued Pushpamala from a makara (mythical aquatic creature) by slaying it with his sword, which then ascended to heaven. Brahma, the god of creation, is also said to have performed penance here, making the site renowned as an ideal place for tapas. A venerable Vataka tree (Banyan tree) in the temple is believed to withstand all earthly disasters, with Lord Vishnu residing in its leaves. Sage Bharadvaja and other sages of the Saptarishi lineage are also said to have meditated here, adding to the spiritual significance of the site. The Pandavas also bathed here before visiting Badrinath on their journey for Svargarohana. The Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers meet at this spot, forming the Aadi Ganga. Devaprayag is further believed to be situated over the mythical Sarasvati River, which flows directly beneath the deity. At times, a small pool of water appears near the sanctum, adding to the sacred ambience. As the confluence of the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi, Devaprayag is counted as one of the five famous Himalayan confluences, the Panch Prayag. Historically, the temple and its surroundings formed a major pilgrimage center, though the rise in connectivity to Badrinath in modern times has shifted the focus, making Raghunathji Temple a secondary pilgrimage site. Despite this, it remains a revered spot for devotees seeking the blessings of Lord Rama and Vishnu in the tranquil Himalayan setting. |
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Neelamegha (Purushottama, Raghunathji) Perumal**<br>(*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Pundarikavalli** |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Banyan tree |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Mangala Theertham, Aadi Ganga River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Mangala Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Deva Sharma, Pushpamala, Brahma, Sage Bharadvaja, Saptarishis |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Neelamegha Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in eleven hymns. |



Lord Sri Neelamegha (Purushottama, Raghunathji) Perumal and Goddess Pundarikavalli - Thirukkandamenum Kadinagar

# 100 Thiruvadari (Badrinath)

**Sthalapuranam:**

In the sacred Himalayas lies Badarikasrama, the divine abode of the twin sages Nara and Narayana—incarnations of the Supreme Lord—who perform eternal penance for the welfare of creation. Manifested as the sons of Dharma and Murti, They embody the ideals of self-discipline and devotion. Narayana is the Supreme Lord Himself, and Nara is His inseparable portion—the two together representing the energy and the energetic. When celestial maidens tried to disturb Their meditation, the Lord revealed infinite forms of divine beauty, humbling their pride. At Their appearance, the cosmos rejoiced—gods, sages, and celestial beings offered hymns of praise. Brahma and the devas bowed, glorifying the Lord whose compassion sustains and sanctifies all worlds. Another tradition narrated in the Brahma-Vaivarta Purana recounts that when Sage Narada once saw Lakshmi massaging the Lord's feet, he playfully rebuked Vishnu for indulging in comfort. To set an example of renunciation, Vishnu journeyed to the Himalayas and performed austerities at Badarinath in the padmasana posture for countless ages. According to sacred tradition, Sri Vishnu once sat here absorbed in deep meditation. So intense was His concentration that He became unaware of the biting cold. Out of compassion, Lakshmi Devi, His divine consort, transformed herself into a Badari tree (jujube tree) to shelter Him from the chill. Pleased by her loving service, the Lord named the place Badarikashrama in her honour. In earlier times, this region was said to be a dense forest of jujube trees, though none remain today. Once, a terrible asura named Sahasra-kavacha tormented the rishis and yogis performing penance in these regions. In distress, the sages sought refuge in the Supreme Lord. Responding to their prayers, Nara and Narayana undertook severe austerities, invoking the grace of the Lord of Vaikuntha. Enraged upon hearing of their penance, Sahasra-kavacha attacked them, but after a fierce battle, the divine brothers vanquished the demon. Thereafter, they resolved to remain eternally in Badarinatha, protecting all seekers and ascetics from the forces of darkness. In due course of time, these two divine Rishis descended once again upon earth as Sri Krishna and Arjuna, born respectively in the dynasties of Yadu and Kuru, to alleviate the burden of the world. In this very sthala, the divine twins manifested as two towering mountains—Nara Parvata on the eastern bank of the Alakananda River, and Narayana Parvata on its western bank. Perpetually adorned with snow, these peaks stand as silent witnesses to the Lord's tapas. Nara Parvata is also known as Kubera Bhandara, for its glacial caves conceal countless gems and treasures. On the northern bank of the sacred Ganga near the temple lies a massive stone known as Brahma-Kapalam. It is believed that offering pindadana (oblations of rice) to one's forefathers at this spot grants liberation to fourteen generations of ancestors. The presiding deity, Sri Badari-Narayana Perumal, is self-manifest from shalagrama-shila. He is enshrined in a seated posture with four arms—the upper hands holding the shankha and chakra, the lower right hand raised in abhaya-mudra (gesture of protection), and the lower left hand resting in yoga-mudra, symbolizing meditation and grace.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Badrinarayana Perumal** (*Sitting posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Aravindhavalli** |
| **Kshetra Vriksham (Sacred Tree):** | Badari tree (Jujube) |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Tapta Kunda, Alakananda River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Taptakanchana Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Sage Narada, Sage Nara |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Badrinarayana Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in one hymn and Thirumangai Azhwar in twenty-one hymns.

Lord Sri Badrinarayana Perumal and Goddess Aravindhavalli - Thiruvadari (Badrinath)

# 101 Thirusalagram (Muktinath)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The sthalapuranam of Salagrama Divyadesam is intimately linked with the Gandaki River, Tulasi, and Radha. Long ago, a Manukula king named Kusadwajan had a wife named Madhavi, who undertook intense tapas toward Sriman Narayanan. As a result of her devotion, she was blessed with a beautiful daughter named Tulasi. From a young age, Tulasi performed severe penance with the desire to marry Sri Vishnu and attain him. Pleased by her devotion, Brahma appeared and granted her a boon that she would indeed marry Sriman Narayanan in her next birth. At the same time, Brahma revealed the story of her previous birth: she had been one of the Gopikas, Radha, and Sudhama, the Hamsa (swan) of Lord Krishna, had been captivated by her beauty. By divine arrangement, Sudhama would be reborn on Earth as Sankhachuda. In her earthly life, Sriman Narayanan assumed the form of Sankhachuda and came to Tulasi's home. Mistaking him for her destined husband, Tulasi initially allowed him to enjoy her beauty, but soon realized he was not who she expected and recoiled. At that moment, Lord Narayana revealed his divine presence, explaining the boon she had received and that Sankhachuda was indeed his Hamsa. Tulasi, though initially distressed, was reassured that this was in accordance with Brahma's promise, and she married Sriman Narayanan. After this, the Lord explained that Tulasi's purity and soul would flow eternally as a river—the Gandaki River—and from this pure river, He himself would manifest as Salagrama Shila, the sacred spiritual stone. Moreover, to signify her eternal devotion, the Lord wore Tulasi as his garland in the celestial ocean, ensuring that she remains inseparably with Him forever. Devotees who perform poojas and glorify Tulasi said to attain high spiritual merit and are blessed not only by Tulasi but directly by Lord Sri Narayanan himself. Furthermore, Salagrama Shilas, being the sacred form of Lord Narayana, embody His eternal presence and are venerated by devotees both in temples and in their homes.

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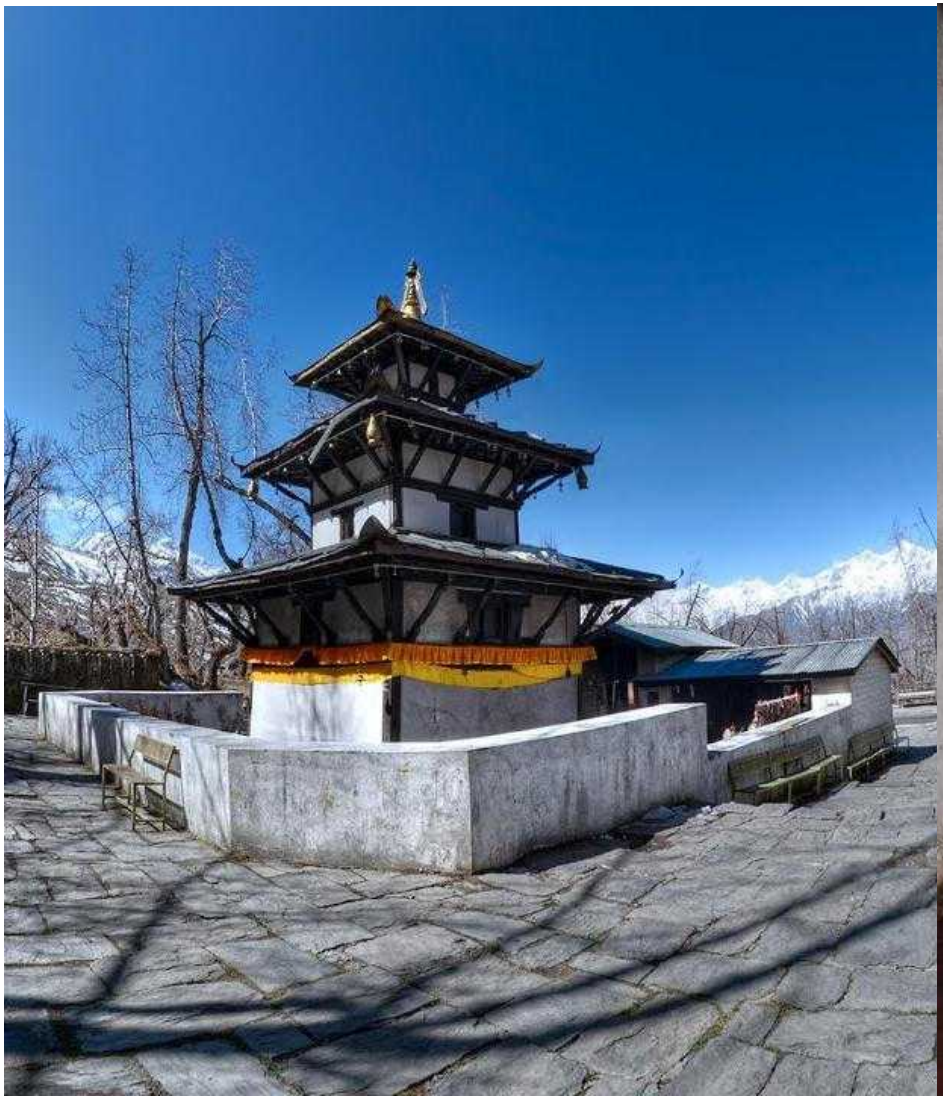
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Srimurti (Mukti Narayana) Perumal**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Sridevi** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Chakra Theertham, Gandaki River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Kanaka Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Lord Brahma, Rudra, Gandaki River |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Srimurti Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in two hymns and Thirumangai Azhwar in ten hymns.
- The only Divyadesam located outside India, situated in Nepal.



Lord Srimurti (Mukti Narayana) Perumal and Goddess Sridevi - Thirusalagram (Muktinath)

# 102 Thiruvadamadurai (Mathura)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Mathura has an ancient and illustrious history, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, who appeared in the Yadava dynasty. Brindavan and Govardhan are included within Vadamathura, which is considered one of the seven mukthi sthalams, along with Avanti, Ayodhya, Dwaraka, Maya, Kanchipuram, and Kasi. Prince Ayu, son of King Pururava of the Chandravamsha, is said to have established the first known city at Mathura during the fifth Treta-yuga. King Pururava ruled the lands on the western bank of the Ganges, while Surya-vamsha kings ruled the eastern bank from Ayodhya. The Vishnu Purana recounts that Pururava's descendants, including Ayu, Nahusha, Yayati, and Yadu, established the Yadava dynasty in Mathura, creating the kingdom of Shurasena. Madhuvana forest, where Mathura Puri lies, was originally the domain of the demon Madhu, who was slain by Shri Hari. Dhruva Maharaja, son of King Uttanapada, performed severe penances in Madhuvana to attain darshana of Vishnu, bathing daily in the Yamuna at Dhruva Ghata and meditating at Dhruva-tila. According to legend, when Sri Rama ruled the land, sages such as Shravana, Bhargava Maharishi, and others complained that an asura named Lavana was troubling them, preventing them from performing tapas. They requested Sri Rama's intervention, and he sent his younger brother Shatrughna, blessing him with a divine arrow. Shatrughna fought the demon and finally killed him, thus saving Mathura. The sages and celestial beings offered their gratitude to Shatrughna. The present city of Mathura was established by Shatrughna. In Dvapara Yuga, Mathura is renowned as the birthplace of Lord Krishna, who appeared in the prison cell of Kamsa over five thousand years ago. During Krishna's time, Mathura was the capital of Shurasena Province. The Yadavas, including clans such as the Vrishnis, Madhavas, Andhakas, and Bhojas, ruled this province. Ugrasena was the king at Krishna's birth, with Kamsa imprisoning him and seizing the throne. Krishna, the eighth child of Devaki and Vasudeva, was secretly taken to Nanda Maharaja's home in Gokula for protection. Krishna spent his first eleven years in Gokula and Vrindavana under the care of Nanda and Yashoda before returning to Mathura to slay Kamsa, liberate his parents, and restore Ugrasena. Later, after repeated attacks on Mathura, Krishna established Dwaraka and relocated the Yadavas. He vanquished all evil demons on earth, and during the Mahabharata war, Krishna ensured the destruction of the warring factions, leaving only the Pandavas and their loyal followers. Krishna disappeared in 3102 BCE, marking the start of Kali-yuga. Following his departure, the Pandavas retired to the Himalayas, and Yudhishthira and Arjuna enthroned Parikshit and Vajranabha, respectively, to continue the Chandra-vamsha dynasty in Indraprastha and Mathura. The Saura Purana states that Mathura is famous in the three worlds, and the dust from Krishna's lotus feet purifies the pathways, bestowing liberation from material bondage. Even before Krishna's birth, Mathura was already considered one of the holiest cities in India. In Satya-yuga, Lord Varahadeva spoke the Adi-Varaha Purana to Bhumi Devi at Vishrama Ghata in Mathura, after saving the earth from devastation. The city's crescent shape, formed by the Yamuna, ensures liberation for those who reside there, as described in the Adi-Varaha Purana.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):** **Lord Sri Govardhana Giridhari Perumal (Govardhanesa, Balakrishna)**
(*Standing posture* - facing East)

**Goddess (Thayar):** **Goddess Satyabhama**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** Indra Theertham, Yamuna River, Govardhana Theertham

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):** Govardhana Vimanan

**Devotees Blessed:** Vasudeva, Devaki, Brahma, Indra and other demigods

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Govardhanesa Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in sixteen hymns, Nammazhwar in ten hymns, Andal in nineteen hymns, Thondaradipodi Azhwar in one hymn, and Thirumangai Azhwar in four hymns.

(Rangaji Mandir - Vrindavan, Haridev Mandir - Govardhan and Keshavji Mandir - Mathura)

Lord Sri Govardhana Giridhari Perumal and Goddess Satyabhama – Thiruvadamadurai (Mathura)

# 103 Thiruvaipadi (Gokula)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Thiruvaipadi (Mahavana, Gokula), one of the twelve sacred forests of Vraja. Though very few trees remain today, it is revered in the Puranas as 'Brihatvana' or the 'Great Forest'. Mahavana is the actual village where Nanda Maharaja and Yashodai resided and where Krishna spent the first three and a half years of His childhood. The name "Gokula" has multiple meanings, including the "residential place of cows," since 'go' means cow and 'kula' means residence or herd. Mahavana and Gokula as the same place, praising the beauty of this forest and the childhood pastimes (kaumara-lila) of Krishna, which delighted the cowherd men and women. Krishna's playful exploits—stealing butter, feeding it to friends and animals, letting loose calves, and slaying demons—can be easily appreciated. At Gokula, one day, Krishna and Balarama were playing near the Yamuna when some boys accused Krishna of eating clay. Balarama supported the claim. When Mother Yashoda came to chastise Krishna, He denied it and invited her to check His mouth. Astonishingly, Yashoda saw the entire cosmic manifestation within Krishna's mouth—planets, stars, the sun, the moon, mountains, rivers, living beings, and even herself with Krishna on her lap. Yashoda was overwhelmed, uncertain whether she was dreaming or witnessing Krishna's mystic power. Krishna then expanded His internal yogamaya potency, causing Yashoda to forget her philosophical doubts and worldly thoughts. Overcome by motherly love, she embraced Krishna, rejoicing in the intimate bliss of her divine child. After Krishna's birth in the prison of Mathura, Vasudeva carried him to Gokula and left him in the care of Nanda. There, Krishna's nama-karana (naming) ceremony was performed by Gargamuni. Gokula became the stage for many of his early divine pastimes: he playfully stole butter from the homes of elderly gopis and vanquished several formidable demons—Shakatasura, who tried to crush him inside a hand-cart by his mystic power; Trinavarta, the whirlwind demon; the witch Putana, who came with evil intent to harm the infant Lord; and Nalakuvara and Manigriva, sons of Kubera, were cursed by sage Narada for their arrogance, turning into trees. As a mischievous child in Gokula, Krishna often stole butter and playfully escaped. One day, Yashoda tied Him to a grinding mortar with a rope around His belly, giving Him the name Damodara ("dāma" = rope, "udara" = belly). Bound to the mortar, Krishna uprooted the cursed trees while playing, restoring Nalakuvara and Manigriva to their original forms.

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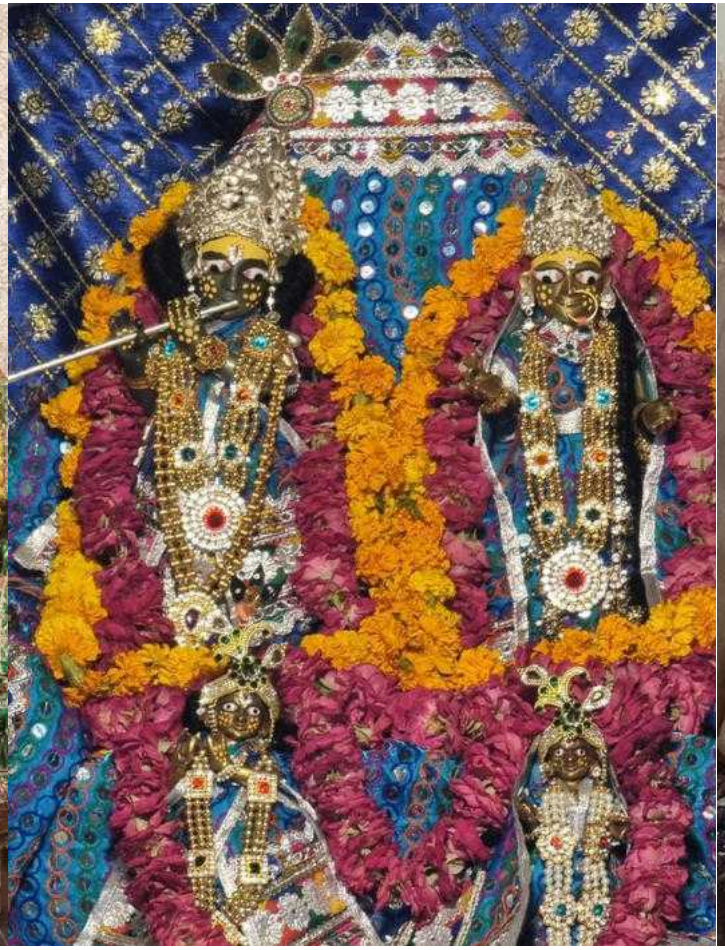
| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Navamohana Krishna Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Rukmini** and **Goddess Satyabhama** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Yamuna River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Hemakoota Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Nanda Maharaj |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Navamohana Krishna Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in ten hymns, Andal in five hymns, and Thirumangai Azhwar in seven hymns. |



(Nanda Bhavan – Gokula, Sri Radha Krishna (Larily-lala) Mandir and Srimati Radharani – Raval)

Lord Sri Navamohana Krishna Perumal, Goddess Rukmini and Goddess Satyabhama - Thiruvaipadi (Gokula)

# 104 Thirudwarakai (Dwaraka)

**Sthalapuranam:**

This sacred sthalam narrates the divine life and earthly mission of Sri Krishna. Vada Mathura, His Janma Bhoomi, witnessed His miraculous appearance to Brahma, Indra, other Devas, and His parents, Vasudeva and Devaki, while they were imprisoned. In Aayarpadi (Gokula and Vrindavan), Krishna grew under the loving care of Nandagopa, spending His childhood amidst the cowherds and performing countless divine pastimes. Later, He journeyed to Dwaraka, revealing His divine presence to His consorts—Rukmini, Satyabhama, and Jambavati—His sons, friends, neighbors, the Yadavas, and the Pandavas. Once in Mathura, a childless king, Gargamuni, was mocked by the Yadavas. Through severe penance to Lord Shiva, he was blessed with a son, Kaalayavannan, who eventually became a threat to the Yadavas. Meanwhile, Mathura itself came under attack by King Jarasandha of Magadha. Foreseeing these dangers, Sri Krishna sought the ocean king's aid to establish a fortified city. Constructed by Vishwakarma, this city—Dwaraka—became a safe haven, a "heavenly gateway" (Dwara) for the Yadavas. When Kaalayavannan attacked, Krishna initially hid in a cave, inadvertently awakening Muchukunda, whose divine boon immediately destroyed the invader. Krishna later blessed Muchukunda. Among Krishna's devotees, the humble Brahmin Sudama (Kuchela) exemplifies ideal devotion. Visiting Krishna at Dwaraka with a simple offering of pounded rice, Sudama was joyfully received, and Krishna transformed his humble hut into a grand home, demonstrating the boundless grace of the Lord. Dwaraka exists in two parts: Gomuki Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka, the island shrine. The main deity, Dwarakanathji, stands majestically, holding the Conch and Disc, with Sri Lakshmi gracing His chest. Legend holds that Dwaraka was built on land reclaimed from the sea. According to the Mahabharata, sage Durvasa once demanded that Krishna and Rukmini pull his chariot to the palace. During the arduous journey, Rukmini fell, and Krishna dug a hole that brought forth the waters of the Ganga. Angered, Durvasa cursed Rukmini to remain at that spot, which is now the site of her shrine. The Ranchhodji temple of Dakor celebrates the devotion of Bodana, a steadfast Krishna devotee who annually traveled to Dwarka to see Dwarakadeesh. In his old age, unable to complete the journey, Lord Krishna, moved by Bodana's devotion, came to him in a bullock cart. The original deity installed by Krishna's grandson now resides in Dakor, while another deity was later established in Dwaraka. Today, Lord Ranchhodji presides over a magnificent temple in Dakor. Yet, the sacred city of Dwaraka endures as the holiest abode on earth, radiating the boundless grace of Lord Krishna.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Dwarakadheesha (Kalyana Narayana) Perumal** (*Standing posture* - facing West) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Kalyana Nachiyar (Lakshmisri), Goddess Rukmini, Ashtamahishis (Eight Principal Queens)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Gomati River, Prabhas Theertham, Confluence of Sea and Gomati River |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Hemakoota Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Draupadi, Sage Durvasa, All Queens headed by Rukmini, Yadavas, Vajranabha, Pandavas |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Dwarakadheesha Perumal sung by Periyazhwar in five hymns, Nammazhwar in one hymn, Andal in one hymn, Thirumazhisai Azhwar in one hymn, and Thirumangai Azhwar in two hymns. |

(Lord Dwarakadeesh – Dwaraka, Lord Ranchhodraiji – Dakor, Goddess Rukmini – Dwaraka)

Lord Sri Dwarakadheesha (Kalyana Narayana) Perumal and Goddess Rukmini – Thirudwarakai

# 105 Thiru Singavel Kundram (Ahobilam)

**Sthalapuranam:**

The Sthalapurana of the Ahobilam Temple, said to be part of the Brahmanda Purana and comprising ten chapters, recounts in rich detail the divine greatness of this sacred kshetra. It extols the sanctity of Ahobilam, describing how Garuda performed intense penance to obtain the vision of the Lord, and offering an account of the sacred ponds that adorn the region. It further speaks of the nine temples of Lord Narasimha in His nine forms and of the penances undertaken by Brahma, Bharadvaja, Gobhila, and Bhargava Rama. The Purana narrates the well-known story of Jaya and Vijaya, their birth as the demons Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu, and the Lord's assurance to the gods that He would incarnate to protect them. It elaborates upon the childhood of Prahlada, the persecution he endured at the hands of his father, and his steadfast devotion that culminated in the manifestation of Lord Narasimha and the destruction of Hiranyakashipu. It also describes the episode of Sarabhavatara and how the Lord subdued that fierce form. The devotion of Bhairava is celebrated as well—his penance to bring forth the river Bhavanasini and his consecration as the Kshetrapala, the guardian deity of Ahobilam. Ultimately, the Purana concludes that the worship of Lord Narasimha alone is the sure path to liberation for all beings. Among the local Chenchu tribes closely associated with Ahobilam, many legends of Narasimha continue to be cherished through vibrant oral traditions. One beloved tale tells that when Lord Vishnu incarnated as Narasimha, Goddess Lakshmi took birth among the Chenchus as a golden maiden named Chenchita. Enamored by her simplicity and devotion, the Lord chose to remain with her in the forest, refusing to return to Vaikuntha. Ahobilam is divided into two parts — Upper Ahobilam (Eguvu Ahobilam), nestled amidst the hills with the Nava Narasimha shrines, and Lower Ahobilam (Diguvu Ahobilam), home to the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha. The nine forms of the Lord worshipped here are Bhargava, Yogananda, Chatravata, Ahobila, Krodakara (Varaha), Karanja, Malola, Jwala, and Pavana Narasimha. Each form embodies a unique aspect of the Lord — from the fierce protector to the serene yogi, from the teacher of Prahlada to the beloved of Lakshmi. The presiding deity, Ahobila Narasimha, is believed to be self-manifest and marks the very spot of the divine incarnation. The Ugra Sthambham, a cleft in the mountain, is revered as the pillar from which Lord Narasimha emerged to slay Hiranyakashipu. Nearby lies the Prahlada Mettu, a small cave shrine where the boy-saint Prahlada is believed to have meditated and worshipped his Lord. Numerous holy water bodies, or theerthas, surround the region; among them, Rakthakundam is famed as the pool where the Lord washed His hands after destroying the demon, its waters still retaining a reddish hue said to symbolize the divine act. Today, Ahobilam continues to flourish as a center of pilgrimage and devotion, with improved accessibility under the guidance of the pontiffs of the Ahobila Matha. Devotees from all over the country undertake the journey through the rugged hills to experience the sacred presence of Lord Narasimha in His nine resplendent forms.

**Moolavar (Main Deity):**

**Lord Sri Ahobila Narasimha Perumal** - (*Sitting posture in Chakrasana* - facing East) – (***Nava Narasimha*** - Krodha Narasimha, Malola Narasimha, Yogananda Narasimha, Pavana Narasimha, Karanja Narasimha, Chhatravata Narasimha, Bhargava Narasimha, Jwala Narasimha.)

**Goddess (Thayar):**

**Goddess Lakshmi, Goddess Amirthavalli** and **Goddess Chenchulakshmi**

**Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):**

Kaalava Theertham, Rama-Lakshmana Theertham, Bheema Theertham, Sanga Theertham, Varaha Theertham, Sudharsana Theertham, Soodha Theertham , Thaara Theertham, Gaja Theertham, Narasimha Theertham, Bhargava Theertham, Vinayaka Theertham, Bhairava Theertham, Raktha Theertham, River Bhavanashini.

**Vimanam (Temple Tower):**

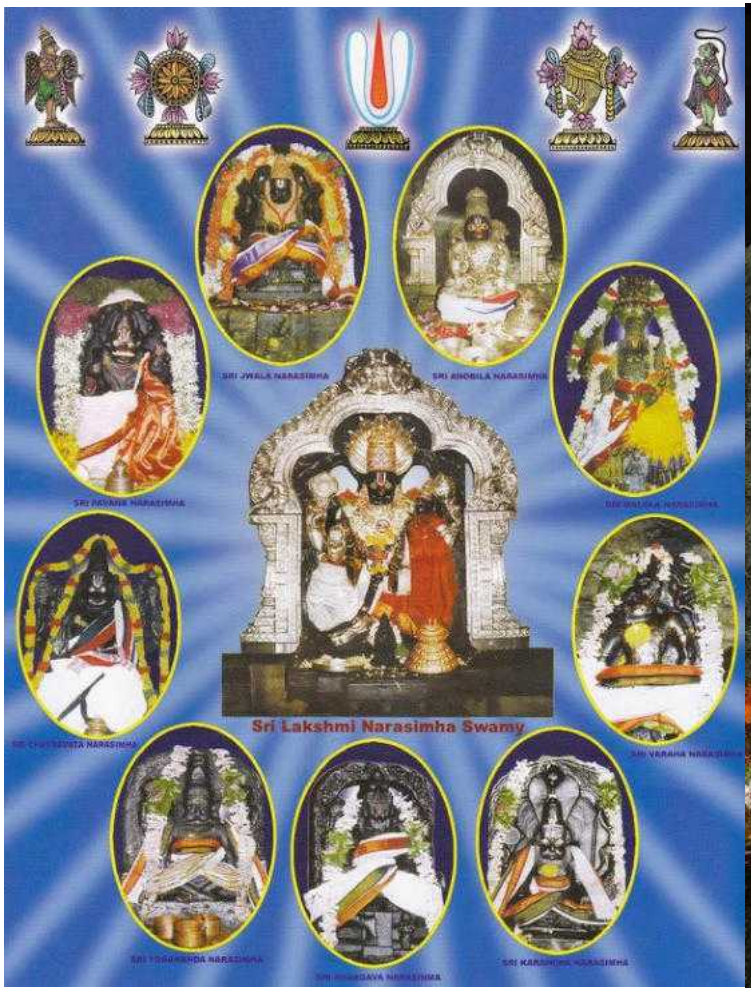
Guhai (Cave) Vimanam

**Devotees Blessed:**

Prahalada, Advin Satakopa Jeeyar, Brahma, Bharadvaja, Gobhila, Bhargava Rama

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ahobila Narasimha Perumal sung by Thirumangai Azhwar in ten hymns.



Lord Sri Ahobila Narasimha Perumal, Goddess Amirthavalli and Goddess Chenchulakshmi - Thiru Singavel Kundram (Ahobilam)

# 106 Thiruvengadam (Tirumalai)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Tirumala is the sacred abode where Sriman Narayana manifests as the Lord of the Seven Hills — Ezhumalaiyan. As ages passed — Krita, Treta, and Dvapara Yugas — the Lord incarnated repeatedly to uphold dharma and destroy adharma. But when Kali Yuga dawned, wickedness spread across the world; kings lost virtue, sages were persecuted, and righteousness faded. Seeing this decline, Lord Brahma, deeply concerned, sought a remedy and concluded that only the touch of Sriman Narayana's divine feet could purify the earth and restore balance. Once to find which of the Trimurti — Brahma, Vishnu, or Shiva — should receive the fruits of the sages' grand sacrifice, Narada suggested that sage Bhrigu test them. Then first he went to Brahmaloka, but Brahma too failed to notice him, earning the curse that he would have no temples on earth. Bhrigu then went to Kailasa, where Shiva and Parvati were absorbed in dancing. Angered by not being received properly, he cursed that on earth, Shiva would be worshipped only in the form of the Linga. Lastly, Bhrigu visited Vaikuntha, where Vishnu lay on Adisesha. In fury, Bhrigu kicked the Lord's chest — yet Vishnu humbly rose, worshipped the sage's feet, and plucked out the extra eye on Bhrigu's foot that symbolized ego and anger. The sage, moved by the Lord's forbearance, declared that Vishnu alone was worthy of receiving the fruits of all yajnas. However, this incident wounded Goddess Lakshmi, for Vishnu's chest was her abode. Feeling insulted, she left Vaikuntha and descended to earth, dwelling in Kolhapur to perform penance. Deprived of her presence, Vaikuntha lost its luster, and the Lord Himself came down to earth in search of Her. Adisesha took the form of the sacred Seshachalam hills, and Vishnu wandered across the land as Srinivasa, weary and forlorn. To sustain Him, Brahma and Shiva assumed the forms of a cow and calf and were entrusted to the Chola king. Each day, the divine cow offered milk to the Lord hidden within an anthill. One day, a cowherd, unable to understand why the cow yielded no milk elsewhere, followed it and saw it pour milk into the anthill. Thinking it was wasting milk, he struck it with his axe — but the Lord emerged to protect the cow, taking the blow on His forehead. The earth was sanctified by the drops of the Lord's blood, which dispelled the sins of Kali Yuga. Even after being wounded, the Lord blessed the cowherd for performing his duty faithfully. This marked the Lord's visible descent upon Tirumala. In another legend, the cowherd's master, the Chola king, was cursed by Srinivasa for his servant's act, as the sins of a servant fall upon his ruler. Repentant, the king sought forgiveness, and the Lord decreed that the king would be reborn as Akasharaja, destined to give his daughter Padmavati in marriage to Him. True to this divine word, Akasharaja was later born, and Padmavati emerged from the sacred Padma Pushkarini at Tiruchanur. Srinivasa, guided by His foster mother Vakula Devi, sought Padmavati and eventually married her at Narayanavanam, reuniting with Mahalakshmi on earth. After the celestial marriage, Lord Srinivasa returned to the Seshachalam hills, choosing to reside eternally there for the welfare of all beings in Kali Yuga. To bless humanity, both the Lord and Goddess manifested in deity form, granting darshan as Sri Venkateswara and Padmavati Devi. This sacred place is also known as Adivaraha Kshetra, where Lord Adivaraha, after slaying the demon Hiranyaksha, chose to reside.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Thiruvenkatamudaiyan, (Govinda, Venkatachalapathi, Balaji, Srinivasa)** (*Standing posture (Up-hill)* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Padmavati (Alarmelmangai) -** *(at Thirucchanoor (Down-hill))* |
| **Utsavar (Procession Deity):** | Sri Kalyana Venkateshwara |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Swami Pushkarini (Koneri), Padmasarovar, Other thousands of Theerthams on the hill |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ananda Nilaya Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Thondaiman, Skanda, Brahma, Sage Agastya |
| **Unique Features / Highlights:** | • Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Thiruvenkatamudaiyan Perumal sung in 202 hymns by Alvars (7 by Periyalvar, 16 by Andal, 11 by Kulasekara Alvar, 15 by Thirumalisai Alvar, 2 by Thiruppaan Alvar, 61 by Thirumangai Alvar, 10 by Poigai Alvar, 9 by Bhoothathalvar, 19 by Peyalvar and 52 by Nammalvar). |

Lord Srinivasa Perumal and Goddess Padmavati - Thiruvengadam (Tirumalai)

# 107 Thiruppaarkadal (Kshira Sagara)

**Sthalapuranam:**

In the highest northern region of the universe, beyond the reach of mortal vision, lies a divine and tranquil realm called Kshira Sagara, the Ocean of Milk. The region of Svetadvipa lies within Dhruvaloka, the realm of Lord Vishnu within the material world, situated above the seven planetary systems. Upon Dhruvaloka rests the Ocean of Milk (Svetadvipa, the White Island — the spiritual heart of the material cosmos), the resplendent Vishnuloka worshiped by all beings. Unlike the perishable worlds, this divine planet will never be destroyed, even when the universe dissolves; it remains eternal, bathed in the Lord's own effulgence. Here, in eternal serenity, resides Lord Kshirabdhinatha, also known as Kshirodakashayi Vishnu, a plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord. He reclines upon the mighty serpent Ananta Sesha, whose coils serve as the Lord's couch and whose hoods rise like a canopy of radiant jewels. The Lord's form glows with divine brilliance — golden and soothing like the rising sun. In His four hands He holds the conch, discus, mace, and lotus — symbols of creation, preservation, protection, and purity. At His lotus feet stands Goddess Lakshmi, ever engaged in loving service, fanning him or pressing his lotus feet with devotion. The island of Svetadvipa floating upon the Ocean of Milk is a replica of Vaikuntha, the eternal spiritual world, placed within the material creation as its pure reflection. Though within the universe, it remains untouched by material energy — ever radiant, peaceful, and full of divine presence. Neither Lord Brahma, Indra, nor any of the demigods can enter this sacred island. When they wish to consult the Lord or seek His guidance, they can only come to the shore of the Ocean of Milk, where they stand in reverence and offer heartfelt prayers. Through meditation and devotion, their message reaches Lord Vishnu, who responds according to His divine will. Whenever the balance of the world is disturbed, the gods approach this holy shore to request the Lord's incarnation to restore dharma. From His peaceful abode upon the Ocean of Milk, Lord Kshirabdhinatha expands Himself into every corner of creation as the Paramatma, the Supersoul. This subtle and all-pervading form of the Lord dwells within the heart of every living being — watching, guiding, and sustaining all from within. Though He rests in perfect stillness upon the ocean of eternity, His divine presence fills every atom, every breath, and every heart. He is the silent witness, the eternal companion, and the inner voice of truth that leads every soul toward Him. This divine abode of the Supreme Lord Vishnu is also known as Vyuha, the celestial realm of His manifested presence. It is the sacred resting place for His chosen devotees, who are transferred here by His grace to dwell in His company. From this holy abode, they later cross the Viraja River, leaving behind the material universe and entering the eternal Spiritual World, the realm of Vaikuntha. This divine abode is graciously bestowed upon Dhruva Maharaj, who reverently worships the Supreme Lord and governs this sacred planet under His guidance.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Sri Ksheerabhdi Natha (Parkadal Natha) Perumal**<br>(*Adisesha Shayanam* - facing East) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Kadal Magal Nachiyar** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Amruta Theertham, Thiruparkadal |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ashtanga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Brahma, Shiva, Indra and all other demigods |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Ksheerabhdi Natha Perumal sung in 51 hymns by Alvars (5 by Periyalvar, 3 by Andal, 2 by Kulasekara Alvar, 1 by Thondardipodi Alvar, 13 by Thirumalisai Alvar, 11 by Thirumangai Alvar, 1 by Poigai Alvar, 2 by Bhoothathalvar, 4 by Peyalvar and 9 by Nammalvar).

- While the first 106 Divya Desams are situated on Earth, this Divyadesam—though located in the universe above all planets in Dhruva Loka—is a spiritual realm embodying the supreme Vyuha.

Lord Parkadal Natha Perumal and Goddess Kadal Magal - Thiruppaarkadal (Kshira Sagara)

# 108 Thiru Paramapadam (Vaikuntam)

**Sthalapuranam:**

Vaikuntha, often referred to as Parama Padam or Nitya Vibhuti, is the eternal heavenly realm—the divine, imperishable world that is the very abode of God. In Vedic literature, it is described as the highest realm, far above the fourteen lokas (worlds), reserved for the liberated devotees of Lord Vishnu. This is the ultimate destination for souls who attain liberation, where suffering, decay, and fear of death are unknown. Guarded by the twin dvarapalakas, Jaya and Vijaya, Vaikuntha is further protected by Vishvaksena, who commands the army of Lord Vishnu. The planets of Vaikuntha are resplendent with golden palaces, hanging gardens heavy with fragrant fruits and flowers, and celestial landscapes that radiate purity, peace, and bliss. These planets lie 26,200,000 yojanas (over 209 million miles) above Satyaloka, beyond the material sky and the sevenfold coverings of the universe, in the effulgence of the Brahman—the spiritual sky itself. Beyond the Causal Ocean, in which all material universes float like tiny footballs, there exists an infinite expanse of spiritual realms. These are the innumerable Vaikuntha planets. Each of these planets surpasses the size of the largest material universes many times over. Inhabitants of these realms, called Maha-paurusikas, are eternal associates of Lord Vishnu, living in perpetual youthfulness and joy, entirely free from the suffering, aging, and fear that binds beings in the material world. They exist in full bliss, engaging in loving devotional service, completely absorbed in the Lord, and untouched by the influence of time (kala). Here, the Supreme Lord as Narayana predominates, while the unconditioned living beings serve Him in the roles of servants, friends, parents, and companions. Their life is one of total freedom and love, devoid of any material entanglements. The Vaikuntha planets themselves are self-illuminating like suns, their light called brahmajyoti, which spreads infinitely. Compared to this boundless spiritual effulgence, the entire material world appears as but a tiny, shadowed fraction. The eternal residents of Vaikuntha live in the presence of Lord Vishnu/Narayana with His consort, Goddess Lakshmi. The palaces are of crystal, shimmering with divine radiance, while the parks and gardens reflect the very essence of liberation, filled with ever-blossoming wish-fulfilling trees, fragrant breezes, and waters that nourish creepers dripping with honey. Exotic birds sing harmoniously alongside the hum of bees, while magnificent flowers bloom eternally. Devotees and their spouses travel in aerial vehicles made of jewels, emeralds, and gold. Yet, despite the breathtaking beauty and abundance, the residents remain fully absorbed in Krishna, their minds unswayed by mundane desires. Every act, every thought, and every sight is suffused with pure devotion and love for the Lord. When the Lord descends to the material world, He does so along with His entourage from Vaikuntha, offering glimpses of this transcendental reality—a world where pure devotion reigns, free from all selfishness, pride, and material entanglement. Unlike the material skies, which are under the control of Durga Devi, the Vaikuntha world is governed by the personal energy of the Lord.

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| **Moolavar (Main Deity):** | **Lord Paramapada Nathan Perumal**<br>(*Sitting posture* - facing South) |
| **Goddess (Thayar):** | **Goddess Paramapada Nayaki (Periya Piratti)** |
| **Kshetra Theertham (Sacred Tank):** | Viraja River, Ayiramadha Pushkarini |
| **Vimanam (Temple Tower):** | Ananthanga Vimanam |
| **Devotees Blessed:** | Ananta, Garuda, Vishwaksena, Nitya Suris, Muktas |

**Unique Features / Highlights:**

- Mangalasasanam (praise) about the Lord Sri Paramapada Nathan Perumal sung in 36 hymns by Alvars (4 by Periyalvar, 1 by Andal, 2 by Thirumalisai Alvar, 1 by Thirumangai Alvar, 2 by Poigai Alvar, 1 by Peyalvar, 1 by Thiruppaan Alvar and 24 by Nammalvar).

- While the first 106 Divya Desams are considered replicas of Vaikuntha, this Vaikuntha exists in the spiritual sky, the Paravyoma. Attaining it is the ultimate goal and destiny of all living beings.

Lord Sri Paramapada Nathan Perumal and Goddess Paramapada Nayaki - Thiru Paramapadam (Vaikuntam)

# Appendix

## Azhwars

The Azhwars are revered as the twelve saintly devotees of Lord Narayana who played a vital role in spreading Vaishnavism across the Tamil-speaking regions. A central theme in the legends of the Alvars is their divine origin, with Lord Vishnu said to have sent various aspects of His own divine insignia to Earth, incarnating as the Alvars. For instance, Poigai Alvar is believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu's conch (shanka), Bhoothath Alvar of His spiritual mace (kaumodaki), and Pey Alvar of His sword (Nandaka). Other Alvars are associated with Vishnu's divine attendants or sacred attributes: Nammalvar with Vishvaksena, Kulasekhara Alvar with the Kaustubha gem, Periyalvar with Garuda, and Thirumangai Alvar with Vishnu's bow (Saranga). Through their heartfelt hymns, they glorified the divine pastimes of the Lord and inspired countless souls toward bhakti. Their 4,000 Tamil verses, filled with love and devotion, were later compiled by Sri Nathamuni as the Nalayira Divya Prabandham, also known as the Dravida Veda. The 108 sacred temples praised in these hymns are collectively known as the Divya Desams. Even today, the Divya Prabandham is sung in Vishnu temples worldwide, carrying forward the timeless legacy of the Azhwars' devotion. Each Azhwar manifested in a unique manner and hailed from different backgrounds, demonstrating that pure devotion to Lord Narayana transcends all distinctions of birth or caste. The Twelve Azhwars,

1. Poigai Azhwar
2. Bhoothath Azhwar
3. Pey Azhwar
4. Thirumazhisai Azhwar
5. Nammalvar
6. Madhurakavi Azhwar
7. Kulasekhara Azhwar
8. Periyalvar
9. Andal (the only woman Azhwar)
10. Thondaradippodi Azhwar
11. Thiruppaan Azhwar
12. Thirumangai Azhwar

### 1. Poigai Azhwar

Poigai Azhwar is revered as the first among the twelve Azhwars and one of the three principal saints, along with Bhoothath Azhwar and Pey Azhwar—collectively known as the Muthalamazhwargal (the first three Azhwars). It is said that these three divine saints appeared on earth within the span of three successive days. Poigai Azhwar's divine appearance took place in a small pond near the Yadothakari temple at Tiruvekka in Kanchipuram. In Tamil, a small pond is called Poigai, and hence the saint was named Poigai Azhwar. He is the incarnation of Panchajanya, the conch of Lord Narayana. Out of his deep devotion to Lord Narayana, he composed a hundred verses known as the Muthal Tiruvandadhi. His composition follows the Andhadhi style, where the ending word of each verse becomes the beginning of the next—symbolizing the unbroken continuity of devotion.

## 2. Bhoothath Azhwar

Bhoothath Azhwar is revered as the second among the twelve Azhwars and one of the three principal saints, along with Poigai Azhwar and Pey Azhwar—collectively known as the Muthalamazhwargal (the first three Azhwars). It is said that these three great devotees appeared on earth within the span of three successive days. Bhoothath Azhwar's divine appearance took place in a Kurukkathi flower (Hiptage benghalensis) in a beautiful garden at Tirukadalmallai (present-day Mahabalipuram). He is the incarnation of Kaumodaki, the mace of Lord Narayana. The word Bhootham in Tamil refers to one who is possessed or deeply absorbed. Since this saint was completely possessed by love for Lord Narayana—immersed in divine thoughts and ecstatic devotion—he came to be known as Bhoothath Azhwar. Out of his intense love and surrender, Bhoothath Azhwar composed a hundred verses glorifying his beloved Lord Narayana, known as the Irandam Tiruvandadhi. Like the other Andhadhi compositions, each verse begins with the ending word of the previous one, symbolizing the endless flow of devotion.

## 3. Pey Azhwar

Pey Azhwar is revered as the third among the twelve Azhwars and one of the three principal saints, along with Poigai Azhwar and Bhoothath Azhwar—collectively known as the Muthalamazhwargal (the first three Azhwars). It is said that these three great devotees appeared on earth within the span of three successive days. Pey Azhwar's divine appearance took place in a red lily (Sevvalli) flower in a well near the Adikesava Perumal Temple at Mylapore (Manikaivaram) in Tamil Nadu. The word Pey in Tamil refers to one who is possessed or deeply inspired, and since this saint was completely absorbed in the divine qualities of Lord Narayana—madly in love with the Supreme—he came to be known as Pey Azhwar. He is the incarnation of Nandakam, the sword of Lord Narayana. In his ecstatic devotion, Pey Azhwar composed a hundred verses glorifying his beloved Lord Narayana, known as the Moondram Tiruvandadhi. Like the other Andhadhi hymns, each verse begins with the ending word of the previous one, signifying the endless and unbroken stream of divine love.

## 4. Thirumazhisai Azhwar

Thirumazhisai Azhwar, the fourth among the twelve Azhwars, was born by the divine will of the Lord to Bhargava Maharishi and Kanakangi at the sacred Jagannatha Perumal Temple in Thirumazhisai, Tamil Nadu. He is the incarnation of Sudarsana, the discus of Lord Narayana. At birth, the foetus emerged as a lifeless lump of flesh without limbs or form. Grieved, the parents left it beneath a bamboo grove and departed on their spiritual journey. Moved by compassion, Lord Narayana blessed the lifeless form, which immediately transformed into a radiant infant.

In time, a humble tribal couple, Thiruvalan and his wife Pankajavalli (also known as Pankaja Chelvi), discovered the miraculous child and lovingly raised him. The child bore a divine mark—an eye on his right leg—revealing his transcendental nature and divine origin.

As he grew, Thirumazhisai Azhwar traveled widely, studying various religious traditions and philosophies. Eventually, by the grace of Pey Azhwar, he embraced the path of Vaishnavism and became an ardent devotee of Lord Narayana. His journeys finally led him to Thiruvekka—the birthplace of Poigai Azhwar—where he spent much of his life immersed in devotion.

A notable episode in his life involves the Pallava King, which profoundly illustrates his unwavering devotion. In a divine reversal, it was the Supreme Lord Himself who responded to the command of His devotee—demonstrating that true bhakti has the power to move even the Almighty.

Each Azhwar manifested in unique circumstances, transcending distinctions of birth and background. Though born in a Brahmin family and raised by a humble tribal couple, Thirumazhisai Azhwar's life stands as a shining example that devotion to Lord Narayana is beyond all worldly considerations—only pure love and surrender matter.

### 5. Nammazhwar

Nammazhwar, the fifth among the twelve Azhwars, is revered as one of the most exalted saints of the Vaishnava tradition. He is the incarnation of Viswaksena, the commander-in-chief of Lord Narayana's army. From the very moment of his birth, he displayed extraordinary divine qualities. Though perfectly healthy, he neither opened his eyes nor cried, nor did he take any nourishment. Astonished and deeply anxious, his parents finally placed the child at the sacred feet of Lord Adinatha Perumal, the presiding deity of the Thirukurugur temple (now known as Azhwar Thirunagari), surrendering to the Lord the responsibility for the child's life and destiny.

After being left in the temple, the divine child slowly crawled toward a tamarind tree, entered a small cavity within its trunk, and sat in deep meditation in the padmasana posture. Immersed in divine consciousness, he remained in that state of blissful absorption for sixteen long years.

Meanwhile, a great Tamil poet and scholar, Madhurakavi Azhwar, while on a pilgrimage in North India, witnessed a mysterious divine light shining toward the south. Following the radiance, he arrived at Thirukurugur, where he found the young saint absorbed in meditation beneath the tamarind tree. With great humility and devotion, Madhurakavi approached him and, after many efforts, succeeded in awakening him from his deep trance.

Through the association of Madhurakavi Azhwar, the world received the divine wisdom of Nammazhwar. His sacred compositions, overflowing with philosophical insight and pure love for Lord Narayana, became foundational texts of Vaishnava theology and devotion. Though Nammazhwar never physically visited the 108 Divya Desams, his hymns vividly describe the deities of all these holy shrines—as if he had directly witnessed them through divine vision.

Each Azhwar appeared under unique and miraculous circumstances, transcending all social and worldly distinctions. Nammazhwar was born into a noble Shudra (Vellalar) family, yet his life was divinely guided from the very beginning, showing that birth or status holds no meaning before the power of pure devotion. Through his life and works, Nammazhwar stands as a shining beacon, revealing that true bhakti alone leads the soul to the eternal service of Lord Narayana.

### 6. Madhurakavi Azhwar

Madhurakavi Azhwar, the sixth among the twelve Azhwars, was born in a pious Brahmin family in Thirukkolur, near Azhwar Thirunagari in Tamil Nadu. He is the incarnation of Kumuda Ganesha, the servant of Vishvaksena—the commander-in-chief in Vaikunta. From his early years, he was devoted to Lord Vishnu and deeply learned in both Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures. Well-versed in the Vedas

and sacred lore, he composed hymns in praise of the Supreme Lord and lived a life of purity and wisdom.

In the later part of his life, he renounced worldly pursuits and set out on a pilgrimage across North India, visiting the holy cities of Ayodhya, Mathura, and other sacred sites in search of spiritual enlightenment. During this journey, he witnessed a dazzling divine light shining from the southern sky. Moved by divine inspiration, he followed the radiance until it led him to Thirukurugur, where the young saint Nammazhwar sat in deep meditation beneath a tamarind tree.

With great humility and perseverance, Madhurakavi approached the divine child and succeeded, after much effort, in drawing him out from his trance of sixteen years. Recognizing Nammazhwar as a divine manifestation of Lord Narayana's grace, Madhurakavi surrendered at his feet and became his foremost disciple. Under his Guru's guidance, he received the inner meanings of all the shastras and the essence of bhakti.

It was Madhurakavi Azhwar who compiled and preserved his Guru's divine revelations into four sacred works—Tiruvaymozhi (1102 verses), Thiruviruttam (100 verses), Thiruvasiriyam (7 verses), and Periya Thiruvandadhi (87 verses). Out of his deep devotion to his spiritual master, Madhurakavi composed eleven heartfelt verses known as Kanninun Siruthambu, declaring that to him, the Guru—Nammazhwar—was greater even than the Lord Himself. He spent the rest of his life immersed in glorifying his Guru and reciting the Tiruvaymozhi.

When Nammazhwar prepared to ascend to Vaikuntha, Madhurakavi humbly sought his blessings. Out of compassion, Nammazhwar bestowed upon him his own deity form, along with a deity of Sri Ramanuja, the Bhavishya Acharya—the future acarya who would continue the Azhwars' divine mission.

Each Azhwar manifested in unique circumstances to show that bhakti is beyond the limits of birth or caste. Though Madhurakavi was born in a learned Brahmin family, he completely surrendered to his Guru, who was born in a Shudra family. Through this, Lord Narayana and His devotees beautifully demonstrate that true devotion and surrender—not social status—are the real qualifications for attaining divine grace.

### 7. Kulasekhara Azhwar

Kulasekhara Azhwar, the seventh among the twelve Azhwars, was born in the royal Chera dynasty at Periyar, in present-day Kerala. He is the incarnation of Kaustubham, the gem necklace of Lord Narayana. Endowed with brilliance and devotion from birth, he mastered the shastras, Tamil and Sanskrit literature, the fine arts, and the martial sciences. Ascending the throne, he ruled over Kolli (modern-day Uraiyur), Koodal (Madurai), and Kongu with wisdom, justice, and compassion, winning the love of his subjects and the admiration of neighboring kings.

Though he lived amidst royal opulence, his heart ever longed for the divine service of Lord Narayana. Renouncing worldly pleasures, Kulasekhara Azhwar crowned his son as successor and set out on pilgrimage to the sacred temples of the Lord. His life was adorned with divine experiences—having the darshan of Lord Rama, conversing with Lord Srinivasa of Tirumala, and humbly praying for eternal service at His lotus feet.

A great poet and scholar, he composed numerous pasurams—songs of deep devotion and surrender—revealing the ideal of bhakti through royal simplicity and divine love. His hymns are filled with longing for the Lord's abode and the company of His devotees, reflecting his yearning to serve the Lord as Hanuman served Sri Rama.

Kulasekhara Azhwar is traditionally identified with Kulasekhara Varma, the illustrious dramatist and king of the Chera lineage. The royal line of Travancore claims descent from him; the Maharajas of Travancore bear the title Kulasekhara Perumal. The sacred crown Cheramudi, adorned with the padukas (sandals) of Lord Vishnu, is believed to have belonged to Kulasekhara Azhwar. Even today, the Travancore kings wear this crown only after performing the Hiranyagarbha ritual, continuing his legacy of devotion.

Each of the Azhwars appeared to demonstrate that love for Lord Narayana transcends all barriers of birth and position. Though Kulasekhara Azhwar was born into a royal Kshatriya family, he cast aside pride and power, bowing humbly before the Lord and His devotees. Through his life, Lord Narayana and His servant Kulasekhara Azhwar teach us that devotion alone—not lineage, learning, or status—is the true path to divine realization.

### 8. Periyalwar

Periyalwar, the eighth among the twelve Azhwars, was born in the sacred town of Srivilliputhur, in a pious Brahmin family. He is the incarnation of Vainatheya (Garuda), the bird carrier of Lord Narayana. His parents named him Vishnuchittar, meaning "one whose heart is filled with Lord Vishnu." From his early years, he was deeply absorbed in devotion to Lord Narayana, choosing the path of loving service over worldly pursuits.

Vishnuchittar dedicated his life to the Lord's nanda-vanam—the flower garden of the temple—where he lovingly cultivated flowers, plucked them with devotion, and wove exquisite garlands for the Lord. His heart overflowed with joy whenever he beheld the Lord adorned with those garlands, and he would sing melodious hymns glorifying His divine beauty and compassion.

He was married to a virtuous and devoted wife named Viraja. Though they were childless for many years, they lived a life of perfect peace and devotion, sustained by the mercy of Lord Narayana.

One day, the king of Madurai held a debate to find the person who could best explain the Supreme Truth. Vishnuchittar won the debate, and as he was being honored, Lord Vishnu Himself appeared from the sky riding on Garuda. Overwhelmed, Vishnuchittar saw the Lord and praised Him with great love, singing "Pallandu Pallandu" (May You live forever, my Lord!). From that day, he became known as Periyazhwar, meaning "the great devotee."

In due course, Goddess Bhudevi, the consort of Lord Narayana, expressed her desire to uplift the fallen souls of this world. With the Lord's divine sanction, she descended to Earth, appearing as a radiant child in the Tulasi vanam (holy garden) of Vishnuchittar. The saintly gardener found this divine infant beneath the Tulasi bushes, glowing like the rising sun. Overwhelmed with joy, he took the child home and lovingly raised her as his own daughter, naming her Kodhai, later revered as Andal—the only female Azhwar and the embodiment of divine love.

Periyalwar's life exemplifies humility, devotion, and the spirit of selfless service. Though born in a noble Brahmin family, he displayed no pride in lineage or scholarship. Instead, he devoted his heart and hands entirely to the Lord's worship, demonstrating that true bhakti transcends all distinctions of caste, birth, or status.

Thus, through the pure life of Periyalwar, the Lord Himself teaches that devotion is not measured by birth or position, but by the sincerity of the heart. Periyalwar's divine service blossomed into perfection when his foster daughter Andal became the very symbol of parabhakti—supreme love for Lord Vishnu.

### 9. Andal

Goddess Bhudevi, the consort of Lord Narayana, expressed her desire to uplift the fallen souls of this world. With the Lord's divine sanction, she descended to Earth, appearing as a radiant child in the Tulasi vanam (holy garden) of Vishnuchittar. The saintly gardener found this divine infant beneath the Tulasi bushes, glowing like the rising sun. Overwhelmed with joy, he took the child home and lovingly raised her as his own daughter, naming her Kodhai, later revered as Andal—the only female Azhwar and the embodiment of divine love.

From a young age, Kothai listened to stories and songs about Lord Krishna. Her heart was filled with love for Him, and she imagined herself as His bride. Every day, Periyalvar made flower garlands to offer to the Lord. Out of pure devotion, Kothai would secretly wear the garlands first, thinking of the Lord with love, and then place them back. When her father discovered this, he was initially upset. But that night, Lord Vishnu appeared in his dream, saying that He loved only the garlands worn by Andal. From then on, the garlands touched by Andal were offered to the Lord with great joy.

Andal expressed her love and longing for Lord Krishna through two famous Tamil works: Tiruppavai and Nachiyar Tirumozhi. In these songs, she prayed with deep devotion, offering her heart completely to the Lord. Later, Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam appeared in her dream and asked her to come to Him. When she reached the temple and went near the deity, she entered the deity of the Lord and reached the abode of the Lord to serve him eternally.

### 10. Thondaradipodi Azhwar

Thondaradipodi Azhwar, the tenth among the twelve Azhwars, was born in a Kudumi Sozhiyap Brahmin family in Thirumandangudi (also called Pullaboothangudi) and was named Vipra Narayanan by his parents. He is the incarnation of Vanamālāi—the Fragrant Garland of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Lord Vanamali). Under the guidance of his father, he received thorough training in the Vedas, Upanishads, Sanskrit, and Tamil, developing both knowledge and deep devotion to Lord Narayana.

From a young age, he remained detached from worldly life, dedicating himself entirely to the service of the Lord and His devotees. His humility and deep respect for the devotees of Lord Vishnu earned him the name Thondaradipodi, meaning "dust at the feet of the Lord's devotees."

At one point, he set out on a pilgrimage to Srirangam (Periya Kovil) and was so captivated by the beauty and majesty of Lord Ranganatha that he decided to settle permanently in a grove near the temple. There, he created a beautiful garden filled with fragrant flowers and Tulasi plants, tending it

with love and care. Living in a modest hut within the garden, he visited the temple three times daily, offering flowers and Tulasi to the lotus feet of the Lord.

During his lifetime, Lord Narayana enacted a divine pastime to glorify His devotee. Thondaradipodi Azhwar faced tribulations caused by a local woman named Devadevi, which escalated to a threat to his life. Yet, by the Lord's mercy, he was miraculously protected, and his devotion and the Lord's grace were revealed far and wide.

Thondaradipodi Azhwar's works reflect his devotion to Lord Rama, the charm of Sri Krishna, and his compassion for devotees like Gajendra. His famous prayer, Thirupalliyezhuchi, is sung to awaken the Lord in Vishnu temples every morning, symbolizing the intimate relationship between devotee and deity.

Each Azhwar manifested to show that devotion transcends birth, caste, or social position. Though born in a learned Brahmin family, Thondaradipodi Azhwar lived a life of humility and selfless service. His life further teaches that even if one strays from the path of bhakti due to past karma or mistakes, utter dependence on the Lord can restore one to the path of pure devotion. Through his example, Lord Narayana demonstrates that unwavering surrender and devotion are the true measures of spiritual attainment.

### 11. Thiruppaan Azhwar

Thiruppaan Azhwar, the eleventh among the twelve Azhwars, was born in a small village called Alagapuri (or Urayur) near Srirangam, into the Paanar community—traditional musicians and song-makers renowned for moving audiences to states of ecstasy and bliss. Though the Paanars were considered outcastes, Thiruppaan Azhwar was the incarnation of Srivatsam, the divine mark on Lord Narayana's chest, and his life was a testament to the power of pure devotion over social distinctions.

From childhood, he remained entirely absorbed in the love of Lord Sri Ranganatha, the presiding deity of Srirangam. Always carrying a veena, he sang the Lord's glories with such devotion that nothing else mattered to him—not the hardships or discrimination faced by his community.

At that time, outcastes were forbidden from approaching certain shores of the Cauvery River where Brahmins performed their rituals. Thiruppaan Azhwar, respecting this rule, stood at a distance along the riverbank and sang his hymns, offering his heart entirely to the Lord. Once, however, he was mistreated by some Brahmins despite his innocence. Immersed in devotion, he did not take offense, yet Lord Ranganatha personally intervened to honor the devotion of His servant. The devotee who had caused the offense was divinely compelled to carry Thiruppaan Azhwar on his shoulders into the sanctum of the temple. Overwhelmed by the Lord's mercy, the Azhwar sang the sacred pasuram "Amalannadhipiraan". Upon completing the hymn, he entered into the transcendental form of Lord Ranganatha and returned to Vaikunta, the spiritual abode.

Each Azhwar appeared to demonstrate that devotion transcends birth, caste, or social hierarchy. Though Thiruppaan Azhwar was born into a marginalized community, he served the Lord and respected all living beings with unwavering love. Through his life, Lord Narayana and His devotee show that even when society opposes a devotee, pure bhakti cannot be hindered. Thiruppaan Azhwar exemplifies the supreme truth that birth or social status is irrelevant in the pursuit of love and surrender to the Lord.

## 12. Thirumangai Azhwar

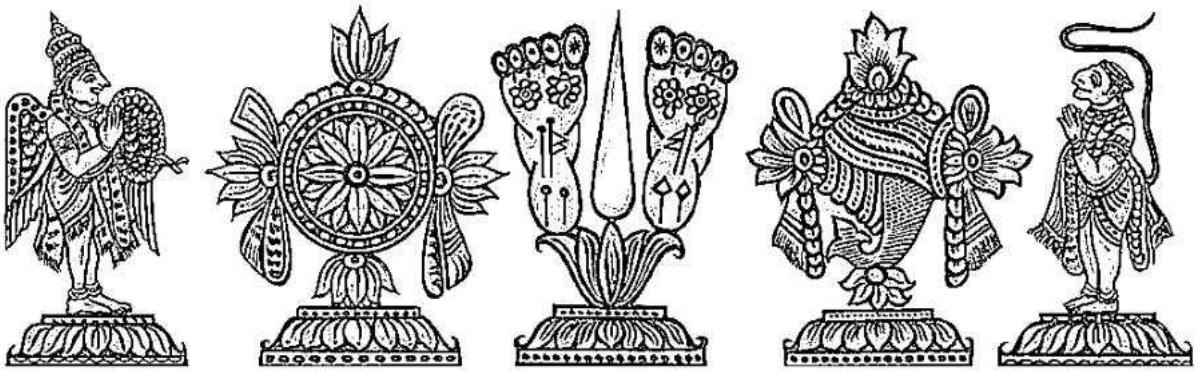
Thirumangai Azhwar, the twelfth and final among the twelve Azhwars, was born in a small village near Sirkazhi, Tamil Nadu, into the Mutharaiyar family—a warrior lineage. His father, Nilam Mutharaiyar, was a respected general under the Chola Empire. Thirumangai Azhwar is considered the incarnation of Saranga, the divine bow of Lord Narayana.

Endowed with exceptional skill in archery and warfare, he served as a military commander under the Chola king. In recognition of his valor, he was granted a small territory called Ali Nadu, with its capital at Thirumangai, earning him the title Thirumangai Mannan (King of Thirumangai).

The turning point in his spiritual journey came when he married the divine and beautiful Kumudavalli Naachiyaar. She set two conditions before accepting him as her husband: first, that he embrace Vaishnavism through proper initiation by an Acharya, and second, that he serve 1,008 devotees of Lord Narayana with a grand meal every day for a year. She also inspired him to renovate the Sri Ranganatha Temple at Srirangam.

Driven by devotion and a desire to fulfill his promises, Thirumangai Azhwar spent beyond his means. Eventually, he lost his kingdom and faced extreme difficulties in maintaining the feeding of devotees and temple renovations. In desperation, he resorted to robbing the rich to continue his service.

By the mercy of Lord Narayana, Thirumangai Azhwar was guided back to righteousness. He renounced all worldly attachments and undertook extensive pilgrimages, visiting over 86 Divya Desams—the highest among all Azhwars—singing 1,253 pasurams, the largest single contribution to the Nalayira Divya Prabandham. His life culminated in surrendering at the lotus feet of the deity at Thirukkurungudi, attaining Vaikunta.

Each Azhwar appeared to demonstrate that devotion transcends birth, caste, or social status. Though born in a royal Kshatriya family, Thirumangai Azhwar displayed humility, respect for all living beings, and total surrender to the Lord. His life also illustrates that sincere effort to serve the Lord, even under extreme circumstances, can lead to divine guidance. While his temporary resort to robbery is not to be emulated, it underscores a profound principle: the highest goal is to satisfy Lord Narayana, with unwavering loyalty, truthfulness, and devotion. Through Thirumangai Azhwar, we learn that pure bhakti and surrender alone determine spiritual perfection.

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